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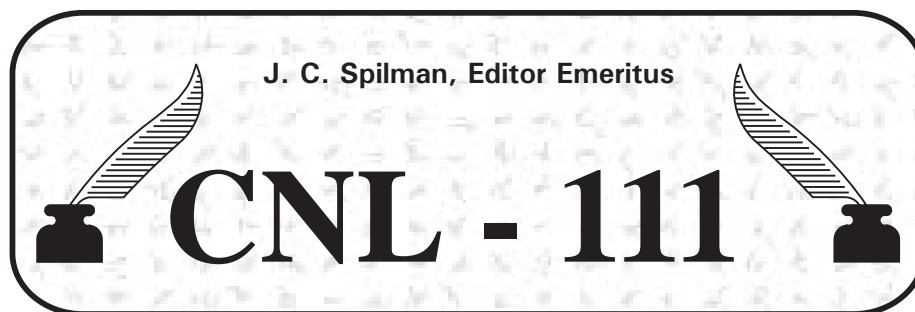
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P. L. Mossman, M.D., Editor

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to CNL-111, a single subject issue. "The Editor," Dr. Philip Mossman, is taking a well-deserved break from his editorial responsibilities with this issue. He will resume his duties with the preparation of CNL-112.

This issue concentrates on an area of early American numismatics that had been somewhat overlooked until recent years — counterfeit British halfpence. Used by the common man for everyday purchases, such as a loaf of bread, these unauthorized coppers circulated widely within the Colonies and the early United States of America, earning a place in our numismatic history. It is an area of difficult study, however, because counterfeiters do not leave behind records of their operations. The primary evidence of their activities lies in their products, the counterfeit halfpence themselves.

Byron Weston has assembled an impressive reference collection of these fascinating coppers and, with an analytical mind, he has studied his collection along with current literature on the subject. Fortunately for us, he has taken the time and effort to share his observations and conclusions on this complex topic. Initially, his paper, which is an offshoot of TN-161, is written in an engaging chronological format which details his "coming of age" in this area of study. Later in the paper he smoothly switches over to the more typical research style format. Like most studies, his is an ongoing effort and this paper documents his findings and thinking up to the publication of this issue.

Byron makes some startling observations, introduces some new terminology and debunks the myth that crude die cutting indicates American manufacture. His paper is enhanced

with numerous figures illustrating his discussion, providing us with the ability to see for ourselves. A glossary of counterfeit halfpence terminology at the end of the paper provides a convenient reference of definitions while summarizing the main points of the paper. Byron's work is a significant step forward in the study of counterfeit British halfpence, an area of study, however, still in its infancy stage. Hopefully his paper will encourage additional serious study on this topic.

We would like to remind you of two upcoming colonial coinage related events. First, the American Numismatic Society will hold its Coinage of the Americas Conference (COAC) in two parts this year. The first part, on November 6, will be on Washingtonia, to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the death of George Washington. The second part, on December 4, will be on the coinage of the Caribbean. Those interested in delivering a paper or exhibiting at either COAC should write to John Kleeberg at the ANS, Broadway & 155th Street, New York, NY 10032-7598 or via e-mail to Kleeberg@AmNumSoc.org. Second, the annual C4 Convention will be held in conjunction with the Bay State Coin Show on November 5–7, 1999 at the Radisson Hotel (200 Stuart Street) in Boston. Several educational talks are planned over the first two days including a talk by our own editor, Dr. Philip Mossman, titled "Coinage that Circulated in Colonial America." For more details, please contact the Colonial Coin Collectors Club president, Dennis Wierzbza, at e-mail address wierzbza@shore.net.

Finally, the CNL editing team would like to publicly thank Les Elam, former Executive Director of the ANS, for his strong support of CNL over the past few years. Les opted to take early retirement, effective March 31, 1999. We were pleased to learn, however, that Les will be remaining with the ANS as a consultant for a period of time during which he will maintain his CNL involvement. Les, who has a strong background in publishing, has actively taken part in the production of CNL and his expertise is very much appreciated.

Gary Trudgen
Associate Editor

Evasion Hybrids: The Missing Link

by

Byron K. Weston; Milesburg, PA

Introduction

My previous commentary concerning counterfeit halfpence and farthings (CNL, TN-161, pp. 1465 to 1468) suggested that crudely designed counterfeits, as well as the more sophisticatedly designed pieces, may have their origin with the makers of the various British Evasion issues. I had also pointed out a divergence of opinions between researchers, myself included, as to the provenance of specific varieties, which one might expect within such a relatively unexplored and virgin field of interest. In the first part of this paper we will explore my own ontogenesis, revealing the “rhyme & reason” of my beliefs.

More recently, there has been some debate as to those varieties that I had labeled as Anonymous. Within this follow-up to TN-161, I would not only like to readdress some of these points of contention, but also offer a few additional hypotheses, postulations and/or theories that I have developed as the result of my personal study of these numismatic curiosities. This latter discussion will come under the heading: C’tft ½d & ¼d et al.

As a point of clarification, it should be noted that the crudely styled counterfeit halfpence that I had obtained from England and Anton No. 15 are, in fact, the same variety – i.e. Weston No. 1 = Anton No. 15. This variety appears to be one of a series of counterfeits that displays very similar features and design characteristics, particularly within their reverse designs. Other, like-styled counterfeits, such as lot #572, of the October 21, 1995 McCawley-Grellman, *John M. Griffee Sale*, have certain of these reverse design elements described as “... long simian pole arm on Britannia, very short stumpy olive arm ...” It was further noted in this lot description that the legends are hand engraved. These similarities with other like varieties are also noted, and it is further suggested that “They were probably struck by the same firm.”

Since the publication of my Technical Note, these “Simian” reverse design styled counterfeits have been the main focus of my personal study, and, are the primary focus of this paper – the *onus probandi*. I have had the pleasure of meeting with William T. Anton, Jr., for the first time in January of 1995, and also on several subsequent occasions, and have discussed our sometime divergent theories concerning counterfeit halfpence and farthings. Bill believes that his No. 15, and other like styled counterfeits, are of North American provenance, based mainly on their crude design style. As is suggested in the introduction of *Forgotten Coins of the North American Colonies*, this follow-up to TN-161 is also being offered as an “... endeavor to correct and expand upon this effort.”

In my closing to TN-161, I had expressed my hope of spurring further discussion, interest and research into these numismatic curiosities. Although I would certainly doubt that my three-page Technical Note had much to do with the recent increase of interest in these “coins,” I was overjoyed that this was the focus of the just concluded 1998 annual A.N.S. *Coinage of the Americas Conference*. This study is an ongoing process with much yet to be discovered, and, for me, has become a lifetime pursuit.

The Quest for Knowledge: A Chronology

Every numismatist has had his/her own naive beginnings, of which I am no different from anyone else. After the initial fascination comes the insatiable thirst for knowledge. Since their first mention in Crosby's 1875 *The Early Coins of America*, and the subsequent address given in April 1886 by C. Wyllis Betts, before the then American Numismatic and Archaeological Society, entitled "Counterfeit Half Pence Current in the American Colonies and their Issue from the Mints of Connecticut and Vermont," there seems to have been a large time gap of research into the contemporary counterfeit halfpence and farthings that may have circulated in the British Colonies and early Confederation during the 18th Century. Not until Vlack's 1974 Photo Plates of "Early English Counterfeit Halfpence Struck in America" was this interest revived.

Opinions evolve and change over time as evidence and theories are tested, but never as much as they have over the last several years, where these contemporary counterfeits have been concerned. For this reason I believe that my personal quest for knowledge is not only important to this study but, perhaps, should also be recorded and preserved for posterity. This personal quest began in 1989 with a query of Q. David Bowers concerning a counterfeit halfpenny that I'd thought may be dated 1776. Mr. Bowers politely admitted having very little knowledge in this area and respectfully forwarded copies of this query to Eric P. Newman and James C. Spilman, editor of *The Colonial Newsletter*.

Mr. Newman referred me to the American Numismatic Society for copies of *Studies on Money in Early America* and *ANS Museum Notes* 33. Mr. Spilman's response came in the form of a copy of *The Colonial Newsletter*, featuring an article by Gary A. Trudgen entitled "James Atlee's Imitation British Halfpence," and, a copy of the *CNL* index and a back issues listing. For the time being, I had at least quenched my initial thirst, and I immediately began immersing myself into these new found information sources to which I had selflessly been given access. Little did I then realize just how prophetic Mr. Newman's closing would become to me: "I believe you realize how complex this subject is and how exciting it is to work on."

In this personal research process I began by gleaning the *CNL* index for any further possible information concerning counterfeit halfpence or farthings, but soon decided to simplify the matter by ordering the complete set of *CNL* back issues. After all, my general interest in "Colonials" had been sparked some years earlier, and one can never have too much information. Naturally I'd also decided to become a Colonial Newsletter Foundation patron, and also had not hesitated in ordering the two books from the American Numismatic Society that Mr. Newman had recommended. From *CNL* I quickly discovered the two DATABOOKS, "The Annotated Betts" and *Money of the American Colonies and Confederation: A Numismatic, Economic and Historical Correlation*, by Philip L. Mossman. I also found the bibliography from the latter to be a potentially valuable source of other possible information on these counterfeits. These two DATABOOKS, combined with Newman's two fine articles, "American Circulation of English and Bungtown Halfpence," in *Studies...* and "Were Counterfeit British Style Halfpence Dated 1785 Made Specifically for American Use?," in *ANSMN* 33, became my primary references on contemporary counterfeit halfpence and farthings.

For the next year I read and studied these references forwards and backwards, backwards and forwards, highlighting numerous key phrases and paragraphs. Having thoroughly absorbed them, I had begun to realize just how important of a role these spurious counterfeits must have played in the daily lives of our Colonial and early American forefathers. It also occurred to me that research into these counterfeits, since the first mention of them by Crosby in 1875 to the present (now mid-1990), seemed biased towards those pieces that were made or believed to have been

made in America. The exception, Newman's work on the 1785 dated varieties, was based on the premise that although they were likely produced in England, they had circulated only in the former Colonies. It seemed that the vast majority of counterfeits, those that were imported from England, were being largely ignored by American researchers. Perhaps there was good cause for this, after all, these were Americans looking for American-made counterfeits.

Trudgen's work on James Atlee's imitations had shown that this series of counterfeits could be linked by punch styles, mulings or obverse/reverse die sharing. It is this punch linkage and die sharing of obverses and reverses with state coinages of Connecticut and Vermont that show how they are all interconnected and is proof of their American status. Trudgen had even separated them into groups, showing when and where it was likely for each group to have been produced. Obviously, Crosby had had some degree of cognition about this 102 years earlier, but perhaps did not realize the scope of varieties that existed, having been able to accumulate 10 varieties (p. 291) "without particular effort to procure such pieces."

Crosby's effort was expounded upon, a relatively short 11 years later, by Betts, who further included other issues that were not obviously related to Atlee's imitations. Most notable was his No. 8, whose reverse was also shared with a previously unknown Connecticut obverse. Some 88 years later, these two counterfeits would be included in Vlack's Photo Plates as Vlack 16-86A and Vlack CT-86A. Vlack continued what seems to have become a tradition by including two more varieties that had no obvious links with Atlee's imitations, Vlack 10-77A and Vlack 14-84A. These four, now Vlack varieties, had become accepted as American in origin.

Not having been scientifically trained, but being of a scientific mind and tempered with an inordinate amount of skepticism, I'd realized that there was plenty of room for debate on the issue of provenance. And, as everyone knows, any good science raises more questions than it answers. Still, it seemed as though I had come a long way in a very short period of time, so I thought it wiser to study further and explore any new sources of information that I could get my hands on.

In the meantime, while all of the intense study had been going on, I had also written to a few dealers in England, one of whom was able to supply me with 57 examples of counterfeit halfpence and farthings. This is when I ran across my first example of what has now become known to me as Weston No. 1 / Anton No. 15. Up until then, other than the three crude counterfeits plated in TN-86 (CNL No. 55, p. 686) and TN-89 (CNL No. 57, p. 705), this was the crudest counterfeit halfpenny I had yet seen. I also couldn't help but notice that a few of the farthings seemed to somehow resemble this halfpenny in some ways. Comparing all of these, together with my "beginner's collection" of British Evasions, what can be described as nothing more than a "feeling" had come over me that they may all be somehow related.

I'd also been spending a considerable amount of time pondering and being perplexed by my "1776" counterfeit halfpenny. The last digit looked as though it could be either a 5 or a 6 (Figure 1). I'd also noticed this phenomenon with certain varieties of New Jersey coppers dated 1786 (Figure 2). At a distance the date appears to be 1785, but as you bring it closer it becomes 1786. These varieties are believed to have been produced at the Rahway Mint by none other than James F. Atlee. How could two so obviously different coins, separated by an ocean and ten or eleven years have such a similar anomalous characteristic? Perhaps this was nothing more than a mere coincidence. Perhaps my counterfeit was simply an overdate?

By now Eric P. Newman's prophetic closing had already begun to play on me. Perhaps I had been letting the complexities overwhelm me and my imagination was beginning to run away. Not only had I found plenty of room for doubt regarding what I'd read, but I had also begun to develop my



Figure 1: Counterfeit halfpenny dated 1775/6. (Shown 1.5X actual size.) *From the author's collection.*

own theories which, at first glance, seemed a bit far-fetched, even to myself. I had also discovered self-doubt. Still, it was my fascination with all of the unknowns that piqued my curiosity and made these contemporary counterfeits even more exciting to me. Obviously, Newman was right!

I felt that I could no longer keep these thoughts to myself, so, on September 23, 1990, I took it upon myself to

write James C. Spilman, a.k.a. "Ye Editor," of *The Colonial Newsletter*, telling him of my crude styled counterfeit halfpence and the suspect 1775/6 overdate. His response came in a letter dated October 2, 1990, and, in a very personable manner, Mr. Spilman instantly became just "Jim."

Jim told me that he knew of other "blundered date" George III counterfeits, but that my 1775/6 and the crude styled counterfeit may be new ones. He also told me that "There are only a half dozen or so CNL Patrons who have indicated their interest in this subject," which I found to be somewhat surprising. The real shock came when I read, "I would appreciate the opportunity to photograph those two specimens and to publish them in CNL." Suddenly, I'd been transformed from collector to "researcher?!"



Figure 2: 1786 New Jersey copper, Maris obverse 21, illustrating the last digit in the date that can look like either a 5 or a 6. (Shown 1.5X actual size.)

It took me almost a week to gather myself together and put together my response. I'd opened my mouth and now I was determined to give it my best effort. I decided to write two short treatises, one for each coin, patterned somewhat after those that were written for TN-86 and TN-89. My motive was to invite commentary from my inquisitive, fellow CNL Patrons. By October 9th I had managed to put this and the coins together and was ready to send them off. As an afterthought, I decided to also include four of the farthings, one of which was of the crude style that I'd thought may be related to my crude halfpence.

In my accompanying letter I further queried Jim as to his information sources on counterfeit halfpence and farthings. I also tried to explain my collecting goals to Jim by quoting from page 77 of Mossman's *CNL DATABOOK*: "...there is definite evidence to include the genuine and counterfeit farthings and halfpence from their beginnings with Charles II through the first coinage of George III as a part of the American Colonial series." Of course, I also explained that I thought this should also include counterfeit and genuine Irish issues as well.

Jim seemed well pleased with what I had written, stating: "Bits and pieces of research on this subject, such as the treatises which you included, are very helpful and should inspire others with like interests to write and to comment on your observations." He went on to say, "There is very little published information available on the British (and Irish) counterfeits and mules, or the American made imitations. The best way, at the moment, to learn about these specimens, is to correspond with someone who has an interest of some sort." He concluded his letter by indicating that he was busy with the next issue of *CNL*, saying that he planned to publish my comments as quickly as he could but that it may be some weeks before he would get back to his regular routine.

Anxiety really never having been one of my vices, until now, it would not be until January 1991 that I would again hear from Jim. In a short letter dated January 4th, he advised me that he had just received a copy of Bill Anton's (author of TN-86) ten photographic plates of counterfeit halfpence and farthings and wanted to take some time to carefully compare my specimens with those illustrated on the plates. Jim also informed me that he had written Mike Ringo, sending him copies of my comments on my halfpence specimens, asking if he could add any information. Perhaps it was only my imagination, but I believed that I had detected a tone of excitement in Jim's letter. I was also somehow managing to maintain patience as one of my virtues, or I had at least convinced myself that this was so.

Having been on Mike Ringo's mailing list, knowing him in a business sense, I thought it might be appropriate or proper etiquette that I should also write him asking for his feedback and expressing my appreciation for his doing so. Like Jim, Mr. Ringo's response came quickly and he had become simply "Mike." In his letter, dated January 16, 1991, Mike told me that contemporary counterfeit halfpence had been his main collecting interest for about ten years. He went on to say, "The piece that you mention as being made from hand-cut dies and having a rectangular shield sounds like a series of many different varieties that are of English origin (the letters are 'spidery'-looking). These pieces were thought by some to have been of American origin, but they tie in with a couple varieties of Evasion type halfpence which were almost certainly produced in Britain. Your 1775/6 variety sounds intriguing, and I would like to take a look at it."

Mike had given me volumes of information in a relatively short letter, and, he had confirmed my suspicions of an Evasion / counterfeit link, of some sort. It wasn't just my imagination after all! Having been a decade ahead of me in his own studies, it was obvious that Mike had been aware of this connection for some time. I found this revelation to be both reassuring and humbling. What's more, Mike also showed a great interest in helping me in my first foray into published research.

Just as I'd gotten my reply to Mike into the mail, and a letter off to Jim, asking him to send the counterfeits on to Mike after he had completed his comparisons with the Anton photoplates, I received a brief update from Jim on his preliminary comparisons between my counterfeits and the Anton plate coins. In his letter, dated January 22, 1991, Jim stated, "I have been able to identify your two halfpence and four farthings from the Anton plates – at least to general types – yours are different dies (I think) but the same types in most cases. At least two of your farthings are suspected as being of 'American' origin, according to Anton." This I had found to be somewhat puzzling as all but the suspect 1775/6 overdate had come from England. It also seemed as though things were suddenly beginning to move much more rapidly, at this time, since our letters had essentially crossed paths.

Jim sent more detailed analyses of my specimens on February 18th, also informing me that he had sent the coins on to Mike Ringo for his study and analyses. Jim further informed me that, "Unfortunately I do not have Bill Anton's permission to reproduce any of his photos, so I cannot make copies and send them along, but I will write to him and see if he will give permission to publish



Figure 3: C'tf't Farthing of 1773. The author believes that this crudely styled farthing may be related to his crude halfpenny, by style, and in turn would also be related to the British Evasion series. (Shown 1.5X actual size.) *From the author's collection.*



Figure 4: Anton 101, obverse. From Anton Plate VII. James Spilman's analysis comparing the Anton plates with the author's crude farthing, revealed that this obverse most resembles that of the author's specimen. (Shown 1.5X actual size.) *Courtesy of William T. Anton.*



Figure 5: Anton 103, reverse. From Anton Plate VIII. Comparisons of reverse designs by James Spilman indicated that this reverse from the Anton plates most resembled that of the author's specimen, also dated 1773. (Shown 1.5X actual size.) *Courtesy of William T. Anton*

some of them in conjunction with discussions in *CNL* (such as your treatises).” (*For the purpose of this study, we will discuss here only the one crudely styled farthing, also continuing the discussion of the crudely styled halfpenny and, of course, the suspect 1775/6 overdate.*) Jim’s analysis of the crude farthing, that I’d thought may be interconnected with the crude halfpenny and British Evasions, was as follows:

C’tf’t Farthing 1773. Appears to be like Anton 101 obverse and 103 reverse. Triangular shield. Anton 101 is dated 1757, Anton 103 is dated 1773 (like yours).

Even though I did not have a copy of Anton’s plates for my own comparison, Jim’s analysis of this particular farthing, in itself, had given me plenty to think about, especially since I also had six other similarly styled farthings, that I had not sent to Jim, all of which had come from England. However, since my treatise on the crudely styled halfpenny was the focus, I relegated these thoughts to the back of my mind. (I had also pointed out to Jim that this particular piece appears to have another word etched into the coin just above *GEORGIVS*, perhaps, “*TIRAN*” or “*TIRANUS*.”)

Jim’s analysis of the crude halfpenny was much more succinct:

C’tf’t ½d of 177? Small head bust right. Very “square” shield! Appears to be identical to Anton 15 dated 1775.

Obviously, Jim had nailed this one on the head! However, my disappointment came with his analysis of the suspect overdate:

C’tf’t ½d of 1775/6 (?) “Lumpy” S in *GEORGIVS*. Most like Anton 21 Geo. III bust. I suspect that your date is actually 1775 but looks like a 5/6 because of the too deep sinking of the 5 punch which causes an effect that, at certain lighting angles, appears as a 6. That is, the 5 appears to close up and become a 6!

Jim had also sent a copy of these analyses on to Mike, along with the coins. In a letter dated February 26th, Mike had this to say: "I like your 1775 halfpenny, and agree with Jim that it is probably not an overdate. There are many varieties of 1775 halfpence that appear to be dated 1776 when worn, due to the shape of the 5 and the tendency of the numeral to flatten down in circulation. It is similar to a few of the types described in Anton's plates, and can be tied to them through punch-linking."

"Your other halfpenny is the same variety as Anton #15, as Jim pointed out, which is dated 1775. Mr. Anton calls this type 'probably of American manufacture,' with which I disagree; as I mentioned in my last letter to you, it is tied to some evasion halfpence varieties by die linkage, and so was almost certainly produced in England."

"In regard to the counterfeit farthings, I have always believed that they were produced exclusively in England, as they were not important coins in American commerce and probably did not circulate to any great extent here. As in the case of the halfpence varieties with the spidery hand-cut lettering, many of the farthings are also tied to British evasive coppers, and again Anton ascribes many of them to an American origin, probably based on the crudeness of their manufacture."

Although the "no longer suspect overdate" was currently in Mike's hands, its image was mentally engraved in my mind. From my memory of this piece I could not see how either Jim's or Mike's explanations would fit. It wasn't worn that much and Jim's "too deep sinking of the 5 effect" did not seem to me to be the explanation either. I'd remembered a definite "linkage" from the tail of the 5 going up to the downward stroke of the top part of the 5. (See Figure 6.) I was not yet ready to give up on this, but I could also agree that there may be another, better, explanation for this anomaly, other than it being an overdate.

In a letter dated March 5, 1991, I explained to Mike that it had occurred to me that it may not be an overdate, but that there still may be some other cause for it to look this way. I thanked him for his thorough analyses, and asked if he'd like to see any more of my collection. Mike got back to me in a week's time saying, "Feel free to send along the rest of your counterfeits – I'd like to look at them, and will tell what I can about them. I always enjoy viewing collections and discussing them, especially these pieces." Naturally, I did not hesitate to take Mike up on this offer and in two weeks' time they were all packaged up and on their way. This would also give me a chance to regroup my thoughts and return to my own studies for a time.

Obviously, Mike's findings were at odds with Anton's assertion that these crudely styled counterfeits were of American origin, based solely on their crude design style. I'd come to realize



Figure 6: Date area enlargement of the author's suspect overdate halfpenny, clearly showing a closed loop 5.

that if Mike's "spidery lettered" counterfeits could be proven to have a connection with British Evasions, and therefore be proven to be of English provenance, then the basic assumption, as well as the apparent consensus among researchers, that crudeness of design was an indication of American provenance, would also be proven to be baseless. I had also begun to develop another "feeling" – that any crudely designed counterfeit could have an equal or perhaps even a greater likelihood of having been produced in England, rather than in America.

This also reinforced my own thoughts that perhaps this was the same reasoning (i.e. crudeness of design equals American provenance) for Vlack to have included V10-77A and V14-84A in his photo-plates.

Vlack 10-77A had become somewhat of an enigma within an enigma, to me. I could see why Vlack may have included it in his photo-plates, it does resemble an Atlee product in a couple of ways. The profile of the obverse bust design is similar to that used by Atlee and Bailey in Gary A. Trudgen's Group 2, specifically Vlack obverse 17. (See Figures 7 & 8.)

Another commonality with Atlee's work is the use of unfimbriated crossbars within the shield of the British Union (The Crosses of St. Andrew and St. George). However, this design feature was also known to me among my collection of British Evasions. (See Figure 9.)

Still, there is no die or punch linkage that would tie V. 10-77A to Atlee's work, therefore it must have been made by someone other than Atlee. A natural assumption to be made would be that it was perhaps a copy of Atlee's work – i.e. a counterfeit of a counterfeit. Of course, this resemblance and common design feature, combined or individually, may prove nothing, one way or the other. Perhaps no other issuance of a coinage had been counterfeited by more individuals, as evidenced by the diversity of styles, than the George III, 1st issue, halfpence and farthings. This diversity in design styles had lead me to believe that such similar design elements may have just as easily been used on either side of the Atlantic, at least not any less so than a 5 looking like a 6, or vice versa. That any two counterfeiters, working independently, and copying the same design, might use a similar device or style, is certainly not out of the realm of possibility. A viable and logical alternative conclusion might be that these similarities are nothing more than coincidence.

Vlack 14-84A, on the other hand, was another story entirely. Perhaps no other individual counterfeit has had so much written about it. Some 88 years before Vlack had included it in his photoplates, D. T. Batty of Manchester, England had included its description in his four volume catalogue of the copper coinage of Great Britain. Subsequent evidence put forth by Eric P. Newman, in his 1976 monograph, "American Circulation of English and Bungtown Halfpence,"



Figure 7: Vlack 10-77A. Courtesy of Robert A. Vlack. The author believes that any design similarities between this variety and the Atlee/Bailey counterfeit halfpence, may only be coincidental. (Shown 1.5X actual size.) *Courtesy of the ANS.*



Figure 8: Vlack 17, obverse. The author does believe, however, that the profile of V.10-77A and this Atlee/Bailey obverse are very similar and was perhaps one of the reasons that Vlack included it in his photo plates. (Shown 1.5X actual size.) *Courtesy of Gary A. Trudgen.*





Figure 9: Atkins 98, reverse. Cobwright G.0010/B.0630. The author believes that despite the use of unfimbriated crossbars on the Atlee/Machin output of counterfeit halfpence, this should not be a factor in determining provenance as this design characteristic is also known among the British Evasions. [Shown 1.5X actual size.] *From the author's collection.*

would suggest a mint location in North Swansea, Massachusetts. On the surface, this would make sense since V.14-84A was obviously not connected to Atlee's counterfeits, however, a re-examination of Newman's speculation would suggest to me that it was perhaps without merit.

The main support for Newman's theory was a report in the *Providence Gazette and Country Journal* dated April 17, 1784.

Within a Fortnight past, considerable Quantities of counterfeit British Halfpence have been brought here, and many of them passed in small sums. They are of base Metal, badly executed, and of course easily detected - We are desired to mention that they are openly manufactured in a neighboring Town in the State of Massachusetts.

This *report*, in itself, was not much more than rumor in print, perhaps the 18th Century equivalent of tabloid journalism. Obviously this could easily be dismissed as rumor, because this is exactly what it is and was presented to be. As rumors have a habit of doing, this

one spread quickly, again being repeated in the *New York Journal & State Gazette* of April 29, 1784. This rumor continued to grow, now including Boston where it was repeated on May 3, 1784. In two weeks and two days it had spread to three states.

The second bit of evidence that Newman offered was the arrest and conviction of a Benjamin Eastabrooks for *passing* "mixed metal" counterfeit halfpence in Boston. Newman goes on to say that "These halfpence can be presumed to be those that the newspapers indicated were being produced in a southern Massachusetts town near Providence, which could only be the North Swansea-Rehoboth community." Since the Eastabrooks arrest had occurred nearly two years

later, on February 7, 1786, one might think that perhaps the earlier newspaper "accounts" had been long forgotten by this time. Newman had perhaps erred by having looked at this aspect in retrospect. He also had not elaborated on the fact that Eastabrooks was caught *passing* counterfeit halfpence in the port city of Boston, already notorious for the importation of spurious halfpence. The only connection that Newman had made was that Eastabrooks was a laborer from Rehoboth, a community close to North Swansea.



Figure 10: The author believes that there is no credible evidence to support a conclusion that this counterfeit halfpenny is of American manufacture and that it is just as likely to have been produced in England. [Shown 1.5X actual size.] *Courtesy of Mike Ringo.*

Newman had also thoroughly searched for evidence that die struck counterfeits were being made somewhere during this period, but was able only to uncover some evidence of casting still going on. Still, I couldn't help but think that perhaps Newman, and the editor of the "Providence Gazette," may have been on the right track, but on the wrong train. North Swansea was a shipbuilding community, no doubt in constant need of wrought copper or hardware of various sorts in this endeavor. Perhaps one of the many casks imported into North Swansea had contained numerous examples of Vlack 14-84A.

I had also begun a search for evidence to support my new found "feeling" that crude style counterfeits were perhaps more likely to have been produced in England. The first bit of evidence that I was able to come up with I'd found at the top of page 76 of Mossman's *CNL DATABOOK*.

In England, a 1787 examination of false halfpence stated that "8 percent had tolerable resemblance to the king's coin; 43 per cent were blatantly inferior; 12 per cent were blanks; and the balance [37%] was trash which would disgrace common sense to suppose it accepted for coins." (Craig, *London Mint*, p. 253).

Another piece of evidence I was also to find in Mossman's *DATABOOK*, is taken from Crosby's *Early Coins*, page 291, which quoted a March 5, 1787 New York legislative report.

A very great number of pieces in imitation of British half-pence, but much lighter, of inferior copper, and badly executed. – These are generally called by the name Birmingham Coppers, as it is pretty well known that they are made there, and imported in casks, under the name of Hard Ware, or wrought copper.

What was meant by "blatantly inferior" and "badly executed" may be open to interpretation, but in the context in which I believe they were intended, I took this to mean that such pieces were crudely styled, lacking in resemblance to the genuine issue. Just as the counterfeits circulating in the Colonies were, more or less, a reflection of what was also circulating in England, so too were the counterfeits that circulated after the Revolution, up to the Coppers Panic of 1789, equally a reflection of what had been circulating in England during that time, perhaps even more so. Obviously, American researchers had been blinded by the knowledge that die struck counterfeit halfpence had been produced in the Machin / Atlee operations and made the popular assumption that any counterfeit that was equal or inferior to one of these must have also been produced in America. They had either overlooked these contemporary accounts, or perhaps had misinterpreted their meaning. The truth had been replaced by consensus.

My studies had obviously produced more negatives than positives, and being outside the realm of conventional wisdom seemed a lonely place to be. But, having received Mike's analyses of my collection, it was now time to get back to the matters at hand.

Mike's analyses, dated April 18, 1991, arrived a few days ahead of the coins. He'd found four pieces, among those that I had sent to him separately, interesting enough to have photographed them. Particular among those four was my #13, of which Mike stated, "Another type that may be tied to the British Evasion series." I instantly recognized that this piece, being better made than the "spidery lettered" crudely styled counterfeits, would obviously have additional implications in a connection with the Evasions. Mike went on to say, "I think that an in-depth study of the many series of evasive halfpence will help in assigning points of origin to some of the normal counterfeits."

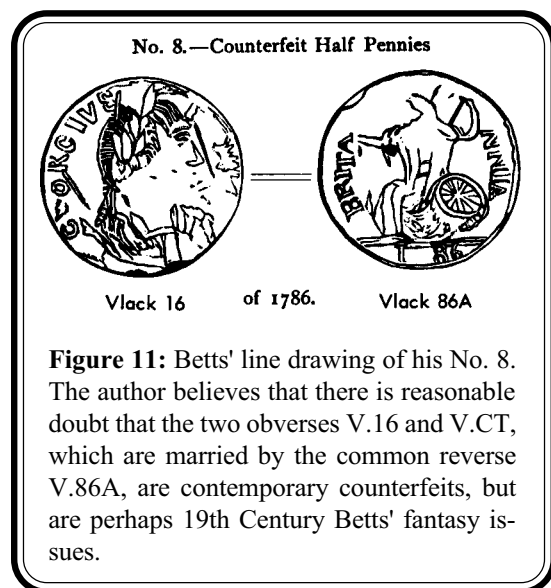
I wrote back to Mike on April 30th, thanking him for his analyses and telling him how excited I was that he found my #13 to have been a possible Evasion "Hybrid." This was the first time that I had used this word to describe this connection, and I'm not really sure where I had gotten it from, but it seemed to fit the situation perfectly. In case Mike had not sent a copy of these analyses on to Jim, I put a copy into the mail.

Jim got back to me in a letter dated May 17th. He seemed a bit confused, wondering if any of the original six coins that I had sent to him were included in this numbering scheme. He went on to say, "After you digest all of Mike's comments and ideas you may decide to revise and / or enlarge your CNL comments on your specimens." I immediately responded to Jim explaining that Mike's analyses were only of those specimens that I had sent to Mike separately, also enclosing a copy of Mike's analyses of the original six. I also pointed out that Mike had said that he had also photographed three specimens from that first group. I went on to tell Jim that, "Yes, I would like to 'revise and / or enlarge' my comments on the specimens for CNL. I've learned 1000% more in the last few months, thanks largely to Mr. Ringo." I further explained that my primary idea was still the same, but that I wanted to add Mike's photo of #13 as an example of an "Evasion Hybrid" of a less crude or more sophisticated style, and that I also wanted to class these counterfeits into this specific category. I also told Jim that I wanted to add an additional category, "Anonymous" counterfeits, to cover specimens of unknown provenance, such as those in TN-86 and 89.

Since neither Jim or Mike had been receptive to my idea about the supposed 1775/6 "blundered date" piece, at this point I decided not to make any further mention of it, not being able to come up with anything more than my original treatise concept that the counterfeiters, having realized that no genuine issue would be made dated 1776, re-engraved the 6 to make it look more like a 5. (*A further discussion of the "blundered" or, more precisely, corrected date counterfeits will take place later in this paper under C'tft ½d & ¼d et al.*) Instead, I had decided to concentrate my thoughts and efforts on these Evasion Hybrids. Obviously, my "short treatise of an inquisitive nature" was no longer going to be as short and a little less inquisitive - I'd gained a tad more self-confidence, and writing a paper for CNL had become both a learning and a growing experience.

By now I had developed a much greater understanding of my fellow counterfeit enthusiasts' desire to label their crudely styled halfpence as American. However, it was also quite obvious to me that this was being done arbitrarily, without any solid evidence to support such a conclusion. This concept, which had been transformed into a belief system of sorts, can be traced back specifically to Betts' No. 8, an extremely crude counterfeit halfpence dated 1786. Now better known as Vlack 16-86A, its die sharing of the British style reverse design with a Connecticut obverse (Vlack CT-86A), is considered evidence that other die struck counterfeit halfpence had been made contemporaneously somewhere in America outside of the Machin / Atlee operations. Other information that I had found in the appendix of Trudgen's paper on "Atlee's Imitations" further suggested links between Betts' Connecticut obverse and the so called "African Head," as well as five other crude Connecticut issues. Trudgen's conclusion was that this group of six Connecticut coppers was engraved by the same individual as Vlack CT-86A. However, a further study of Betts, himself, may reveal that this evidence may not be what it appears.

This fragmented account of Betts' activities I'd come across in Don Taxay's *Counterfeit Mis-Struck and Unofficial U S Coins*. Not unlike several of his 19th Century counterparts, Betts took it upon himself to create copies of Colonial coinages, however, Betts seems to have taken this one step further by creating his own Colonial fantasy issues. Betts' activities had not gone unnoticed by his contemporaries and he was subjected to scorn and ridicule by them. Betts, on the other hand, seems to have taken some relish in fooling his contemporaries with his creations, perhaps looking at the situation he had created as nothing more than a joke. This legitimate concern by his contemporaries seemed to have been forgotten by the time his dissertation before the American



Numismatic and Archaeological Society was made.

As far as including such a notion in my paper, I thought it wiser to keep this particular thought to myself, perhaps subjecting myself to ridicule by my own contemporaries, if I should make any mention of it. Still, since Betts was the discoverer of this crude halfpenny and its Connecticut obverse counterpart, one must wonder if these were indeed contemporary 18th Century counterfeits or perhaps only 19th Century Betts' fantasies. Obviously this subject was deserving of further research, but, Taxay's account was the only information that I was aware of.

To me, at least, the notion that crudeness equates to an American provenance had be-

come totally unfounded – a myth. However, I also felt that it would be equally wrong for me to totally dismiss any possibility that other die struck counterfeit halfpence may have been produced somewhere outside of the Machin / Atlee operations. The problem is to produce hard physical evidence, without which we are left with only assumptions. The very nature of these counterfeits obviously does not facilitate a scientific burden of proof.

I now believed that I had come to a greater understanding, that any counterfeit, regardless of origin, was just as "American." After all, the imports were obviously much more numerous than any other copper coinage circulating during those times, far exceeding the Machin / Atlee output of counterfeit halfpence and the state coinages combined. What's more, many of the state coinage varieties had been patterned after the George II and George III British halfpence. What difference had it made to the common man of those times where his "small change" had come from? More importantly, how important was this to me as a collector of such pieces? To the modern day collector it had come down to whether they were American or British, with no allowance of the unknowns. If these contemporary counterfeits must be labeled, why not just make an allowance for these unknowns?

With all of these thoughts in mind, I began work on my now expanded version of a Technical Note. Having shared some of these thoughts with Jim and Mike over the course of our correspondences, I had little doubt of their acceptance of my "Anonymous" counterfeit halfpence concept. In fact, I'd felt as if I had stolen the "Evasion Hybrid" concept from Mike, having invented only the terminology myself.

By June 10, 1991, copies of my rewrite and individual letters to both Jim and Mike were in the mail. Instead of a single inquisitive paragraph, there were now seven. In addition to the crude style Evasion Hybrid concept, there would now be a second photograph, of my #13, to illustrate a more sophisticated Hybrid. I also incorporated a short dissertation of the "whys and wherefores" of my new Anonymous counterfeits concept.

Again, there would be a large time lapse between correspondences, not hearing from Jim again until his letter of December 28, 1991. By now, my correspondences with Jim had also taken on a more personal air, sometimes discussing our other worldly concerns beyond the realm of colonial coinage. Jim gave me what I considered a most reasonable explanation for his delay in

responding, "Since mid-year my wife and I have been on several extended vacation trips and I am VERY far behind in correspondence." Jim, having been "Ye Editor" of *CNL*, during most of my lifetime, I felt was deserving of an extended vacation! Jim also informed me that he was working towards a mid-year 1992 publication date of my paper and would let me know if he needed help with organizing the photographs.

While I waited for further information on the progress of my paper, I received a short note from Mike stating, "I'll get in touch with Jim about the photos as soon as I can; I've been pretty busy the last few months, and haven't done much work in the darkroom." The three of us had considered using Mike's retakes if they were better than those taken by Jim. Also, Mike had the only photo of #13, so that one would have to come from him. Mike had failed to mention what he thought of my concern about borrowing his Evasion Hybrid concept, so it obviously wasn't a problem to him!

Now it was Jim's turn again, in a letter dated May 8, 1992, Jim had this to say, "Good news on the numismatic front! Bill Anton has agreed that I may use illustrations from his plates in *CNL*! So that solves a major problem with illustrating your paper which, hopefully, can now be published later this year. The problem of a lack of comparative illustrations is solved!" Obviously, Jim had not disguised his excitement so well this time!

I realized that if I was going to make any changes, additions or deletions to my paper, now was probably a good time to do so as things were moving ever closer to a publication date. Changing the beliefs of my fellow collectors would not happen overnight, so I had taken the subtle approach. Even if I could not change their beliefs, at least I might be able to get them to consider other possibilities and perhaps look at these counterfeits in a different light. Just knowing that I was not the only one with different ideas about counterfeit halfpence, did give me some confidence of eventually changing a few minds. But, perhaps I was being too subtle.

I had been well aware of the sale of two examples of the three representative crude style counterfeits in TN-86 and TN-89, by Bowers and Merena, Inc., in September and November of 1990. The first was an example of what is now known as the "Baby Head" counterfeit halfpence, once a part of Abe Kosoff's personal reference collection. Although Anton had suggested a possible American origin for this piece, the cataloguer of this particular specimen had been somewhat more cautious about assigning provenance stating: "...appears that this was a somewhat naive attempt by a local entrepreneur to create for himself a coinage medium upon which he might profit. The origins of these two dies used, however, were disparate and are now unknown." Only the cataloguer may know exactly what he had meant by these statements, but to me it was obvious that he was not willing to commit to an origin for this variety, although the allusion to an American provenance was made.

Some two months later, the (same?) cataloguer of the so called "Banana Nose" counterfeit halfpenny would also suggest an American provenance for this unique variety. Included in the full page lot description were several correspondences between the consignor (whom I had assumed was also the author of TN-89) and three other individuals: "Richard Picker is said to have suggested that this piece resembled the George Washington "Ugly Head" copper, but believed the letters were different. Ian Carradice of the British Museum believed that it imitated a George III halfpenny, was unsure as to whether it was a British or American product, but stated specifically that there were no records of another such piece in the British Museum files. Warren Baker believed that it shared some characteristics of the Blacksmith tokens, specifically Wood-34 and 35, but was, in his opinion, an earlier product than those. Baker was firm in his conviction that this was of North American manufacture." Opinions, being what they are, I found no revelations here, but did find it interesting that so much could be said by so many about a unique, crudely designed



Figure 12: The “Baby Head” C’tf’t ½d. Anton No. 133. Although an allusion to an American provenance for this variety has been made, the author believes that there is no evidence to support such a conclusion and therefore this variety can only be classed as an Anonymous counterfeit. *Courtesy of Mike Ringo.*

counterfeit halfpenny. I suppose there is some resemblance to the George Washington “Ugly Head” copper, and, I also wondered if I might have any counterfeit halfpence that weren’t on file at the British Museum. Warren Baker, with whose name I was familiar from my appreciation of Blacksmith tokens, also gave a forthright and honest opinion, unfortunately not one with which I could agree. Put more simply, despite Mr. Baker’s conviction, I could not blindly accept his word that this was a North American counterfeit.

In addition to the classic argument by the cataloguer that, “Its style is far too naive for it to have been a British product, but is very similar to that seen on others also believed to be of American manufacture,” was included a circumspect argument comparing planchet weights and edges with some state coinage issues. I couldn’t help but wonder what relevance these comparisons might have for this variety in particular, or counterfeit halfpence as a whole. To me, this was like comparing apples with oranges.

Just as I am sure that the cataloguer(s) of these two extremely crude counterfeits may have realized, sometimes what you do not say is as important as what you do, and the power of suggestion can never be underestimated. The arguments made in favor of an American provenance for these two varieties had obviously crossed the very fine line between theory and sheer speculation, and, for me, had become symbolic of the bias of American research of these “coins.”



Figure 13: The “Banana Nose” C’tf’t ½d. The author believes that the arguments made in favor of an American provenance for this unique variety demonstrate the bias of American research towards counterfeit halfpence and that this variety also can only be considered to be of Anonymous origins. [Shown 1.5X actual size.] *Courtesy of Mike Ringo.*

As the result of my review of these two counterfeits (Figures 12 and 13), it suddenly occurred to me that much the same could be said of Vlack 14-84A. Vlack’s inclusion of this variety in his photo-plates had destined this counterfeit to forever be labeled an American counterfeit. Newman’s subsequent theories regarding this piece were circumstantial and highly speculative. As I had also learned from Trudgen’s paper on *Atlee’s Imitations*, D. T. Batty of Manchester, England, had listed this variety as his #3826 in his Vol. 3, published in 1886, some 88 years before its “re-discov-

ery" by Vlack. Not only was there a lack of evidence for its inclusion as an American counterfeit, but an argument for its being an English-made counterfeit could just as easily be made. Perhaps mention of this in my paper may make it a bit less subtle?

I had the second version of my rewrite ready by May 5, 1992. In my accompanying letter to Jim I expressed my delight with Bill Anton having given permission to reprint coins from his plates. I also explained my attempt to broaden the scope of my paper in this second version by questioning the validity of Vlack 14-84A having been produced in America. I now felt strongly that, "without questioning what has already been written, there will never be any advancement in knowledge about these pieces."

Jim's response came in a letter dated June 1st thanking me for my Version 2 rewrite. Jim was excited again, this time about a new piece of equipment as part of the *CNL* systems upgrade – "So – your new manuscript will be one of the first documents to be entered electronically in *CNL*." He also made mention that he and his wife would soon be off to England and that he would let me know how things worked out when they got back. Unfortunately, I realized there would not be enough time to get a letter back to Jim in time so that he might pick up some more counterfeits for me – oh well, it was their vacation, or should I say "holiday!" My selfishness was overshadowed only by my envy.

Jim again got back to me in a letter dated July 25, 1992, and along with this letter was his preliminary draft copy of my paper. I finally had an idea of what my paper might look like in print. Jim was still a bit uncertain about the arrangement of photos, having not yet received a copy of #13 from Mike. Jim went on to say, "When I decided that I had a problem I dropped the article from No. 91 and will run it in No. 92, if all goes according to plan. I juggle articles and papers, at the last minute, like a one armed paper hanger and regret that I have delayed yours for so long."

Having previously worked with a paper hanger, this was obviously something to which I could relate, but I believe that Jim was being modest about his abilities as "Ye Editor." After his many years as editor of *CNL*, holding down a job, and now becoming a world traveler with his wife, I could only marvel at his ability to keep it all together. Not to mention the fine wife that Mrs. Spilman must be, sharing her time with Jim's other passion – *CNL*! Within the week I wrote back to Jim, reminding him that the photo of #13 would have to come from Mike. I also expressed my envy of he and his wife's travels, and their upcoming trips to Alaska in August and New Zealand / Australia in November. I told Jim that these delays were not a problem for me, after all, my part was done, now he would have all of the work!

In another very apologetic letter dated November 28, 1992, Jim again ask for my forgiveness – which I'd thought I had made clear was no longer necessary. Jim went on to say that, "Actually I was scheduled to be in Australia at this time but became ill and had to cancel the trip." He also informed me that he had received the photo of #13 from Mike, and that he would advise me if he needed any additional information. Jim went on to offer a few additional words of wisdom and advice, if I should do any future research on these counterfeits: "I feel certain that as you get deeper into your studies of the counterfeit British halfpence that you will discover that the surface of this subject has been but lightly scratched, so far. I am certain that you realize, far better than I, what a complex subject this is! One suggestion for the future, perhaps your specimens can be shown to be part of a group of specimens – then identified with others of that group. It is obvious to me that many of the specimens shown on the Anton plates are related to each other by style. And – no doubt – die linkage as well. All of this needs to be sorted out before much additional progress is made with this overall 'series' of coins."

That Jim had essentially repeated Eric P. Newman's much earlier prophetic closing was a little unnerving to me, to say the least. Jim was obviously right though, this was an extremely complex topic of study. There was much more work that could be done, and this thought overwhelmed me all over again. I, too, still had much to learn and discover.

It would not be until May 19, 1993 that I would again hear from Jim. This time it was to tell me that he had asked one of the new CNL Associate Editors, Gary Trudgen, to help with finalizing my paper on the "Evasion Hybrids." Jim went on to say, "Gary is, I believe, as knowledgeable on these matters as anyone, and certainly more so than most, including me! He has also worked with Mike Ringo on other projects of a similar nature. I believe that you are opening a very important 'new' subject in early American numismatics and we need to be certain that my personal lack of knowledge does not mess up or cloud the points that you are presenting."

Enclosed with Jim's letter, along with a "first draft" of my paper, was another letter from Gary Trudgen. It seemed that Gary (by now I had realized that these researchers of early American numismatics prefer to be called by their first names) had taken a very systematic approach in his editing, including several questions with regard to clarification or understanding of my terminology. My initial impression of Gary was that he was a man of precision and purpose.

It took me a little less than two weeks to mark up my copy of this first draft and to carefully explain for Gary the various aspects of my paper. Gary then got back to me in a very cordial letter dated June 17, 1993, stating, "I know that you view the purpose of your paper as twofold – that being to suggest provenance links and to dispel assumptions before they are considered facts." He went on to suggest that I should also mention Vlack 10-77A in my paper "because it is in the same boat as Vlack 14-84A." Obviously, Gary was a quick study, and, perhaps, he had become my first "convert!" Again, Gary enclosed a copy of a "second draft," along with even more questions.

I had recently received a copy of Anton's *Forgotten Coins* and along with including Vlack 10-77A I further suggested including Anton No. 134 in this added discussion of unfimbriated crossbars. I again marked up this second draft, answered Gary's questions and included copies of Mike Ringo's analyses, that Gary had requested. There was one point to which Gary had taken exception, my use of the word "anomalies." On this bit of terminology Gary had this to say, "To me, this word doesn't seem to fit into the context of your sentence when you consider that Webster defines the word as 'deviations from the common rule.' How about substituting it with 'curiosities.'" I explained to Gary that I liked this word because it was used in nearly every episode of *Star Trek*, but, Gary was right, it just didn't fit! Obviously, Gary was also very thorough!

Gary got back to me again in a letter dated July 8th. Gary said that he wanted to confer with Mike Ringo concerning his analyses, and that it may be sometime until he was able to get back to working on my paper. Gary also admitted to being a fan of *Star Trek*, and that he too had noticed their perpetual use of the word "anomaly." As it would turn out this would be the only "disagreement" that Gary and I would have.

By December of 1993 Gary and I had pretty well tied up all of the "loose ends" on my paper, and, on January 5, 1994, the "third" and final draft was complete. Gary then sent a copy of this on to Mike for his review.

Then, on May 8th, I received a short letter from Gary asking, "Do you want me to tell Jim Spilman that your paper is completed and that you are ready for it to be published?" The moment of truth had come, and as fast as I could lick a stamp and seal the envelope, my answer was on its way!

In a short letter dated June 8, 1994, Jim confirmed that he had received the "third draft" from Gary, and that my paper would be published later that year.

The Simian/Evasion Connection: The Quest Continues

Now having a new information source in *Forgotten Coins of the North American Colonies*, I would begin anew my studies of these spurious counterfeits with which I had become so fascinated. I had also not forgotten Jim Spilman's wisdom and advice to me that links between these counterfeits would still need to be sorted out before much additional progress can be made with this overall "series of coins."

Although I had questioned Anton's criteria for evidence concerning the relevance of unfimbriated crossbars in determining provenance, there were also other points with which I could agree. For the first time, William T. Anton, Jr. and Bruce Kesse had given some credence to the notion that the counterfeit British imports should be collected along with the American-made counterfeits as part of any Colonial / Confederation era collection of coins. In this sense, *Forgotten Coins...* was undoubtedly a ground breaking effort.

By the time that TN-161 would be published, I would somehow have managed to accumulate nearly 300 specimens of counterfeit halfpence and farthings, of course, many of those being duplicates and in lower grades. But with Anton's plates I would at least now have several varieties that I did not have in my own collection with which to compare. However, with over 500 varieties of counterfeit halfpence having been listed by Batty, this would still represent only a percentage of the total varieties.

Although I do appreciate the better made counterfeits, or "normal" pieces, as Mike Ringo had called them, my interests gravitated more toward the crudely made counterfeits. These held a particular fascination for me, perhaps in the fact that such an obvious counterfeit could have and did, in fact, circulate and was accepted as coin. Also, since many of the crude counterfeits displayed obvious hand cut legends and designs, there seemed to be a more personal connection between myself, the collector, and the counterfeiters who had made these pieces by their own hand.

Anton had made the "general assumption" that these cruder styled counterfeits were American, while Ringo had suggested to me that the "spidery lettered" pieces could be linked with the British Evasions. Having postulated that it was even more likely for crude counterfeits to have been produced in England, rather than in America, naturally I would favor Ringo's viewpoint over Anton's more conventional and traditional way of thinking. However, Anton had not overlooked these probable connections with the British Evasions. Under his Chapter III, *UNIFORM TERMINOLOGY*, Anton states on page 14:

As these emissions were produced under the scenario of evading a Regal decree as to counterfeiting, it follows that they are referred to as Regal Evasion coppers. It is important to note that while this series was undoubtedly the work of many of the same manufacturers who produced Facsimile counterfeit coppers, and that their production and circulation in many cases coincided with the time period of Facsimile counterfeits, these pieces were never manufactured in the Americas and probably saw little circulation here. However, these coins are tangentially related to the Facsimile counterfeits, and as such are considered relevant to the study of early American money.

Since Anton had attributed his No. 15, and other crudely made counterfeits as American in origin, he had obviously considered this link to British Evasions to have only applied to the more "normal" counterfeits, while Ringo had asserted that both these and the "spidery lettered" counterfeits were

connected to the British Evasions. Anton had perhaps overlooked the fact that many of the Evasions were also very crudely made.

Anton would also go on in his book, under Chapter IX, *THE MANUFACTURERS OF COUNTERFEIT COPPERS*, pp. 42 and 43, to reveal who the people responsible for many of the British made counterfeits were:

- William Lutwyche of Birmingham, England, conducted a thriving trade in the manufacture of advertising tokens. These tokens, along with five Conder tokens which he produced, punch link directly to the Evasion series of counterfeits. Most importantly, these Evasions further punch link to several of the lightweight Facsimile counterfeits. He and his manufactory were therefore, without question, directly responsible for the production of Facsimile counterfeit halfpence.
- Peter Kempson, also of Birmingham, was a button manufacturer; however, his manufactory was also responsible for the production of hundreds of varieties of advertising and Conder tokens, hundreds of Regal Evasion counterfeits, and as many Facsimile counterfeits. Interestingly, his Conder and advertising tokens clearly die link to both his Evasion and Facsimile counterfeit output, however the Evasions and Facsimiles do not directly die link to each other.
- The current body of thought among all experts in the field of counterfeits is that Lutwyche and Kempson are responsible for the vast majority of the more common varieties of Facsimile counterfeits circulating in England and the Americas. They are of the belief that Bagnall, another button manufacturer, is responsible for a small amount of production and that Williams, a London manufacturer of tokens, may have also been responsible for some production. In all likelihood, a Mr. Skidmore was the prime manufacturer of lightweight farthings in circulation.

It would seem that the outright counterfeits, Evasions and Conder tokens were, in one way or another, connected by these common origins. If this connection could be proven for any one particular variety of counterfeit, then it could be classed as an Evasion Hybrid. Although it is distinctly possible that there were several small independent counterfeiters operating elsewhere in the British cities, towns or countryside, it was also obvious that the majority of outright counterfeits were being produced by these token and button manufacturers. This being so, then it could also be said that the majority of British counterfeit halfpence and farthings were, in fact, Evasion Hybrids.

Atkins had attributed nearly 500 varieties of Evasions, and the Conder tokens numbered in the thousands of varieties. Matching counterfeit to counterfeit seemed difficult enough, but to figure out all of the interconnections with Evasions and Conder tokens would seem a daunting task, to say the least. Had Anton and Kesse gone on to do this, their book would undoubtedly have been published by the volume. They had, however, gone on to say that:

A very close friend of author Anton in England, a top expert in the field of Evasion counterfeits, is presently finalizing a monograph on that subject including their connection with the Conder and Facsimile counterfeit series.

I still considered myself very much a novice and felt that such a task would be far beyond my own abilities. However, perhaps fate had now come into play, as the connection between an Evasion and the "spidery lettered" Hybrids would soon be revealed to me. It would be quite by accident that I would stumble across this connection, and, in fact, it wasn't even my "discovery." Shortly after Gary Trudgen and I had finished up the third draft of TN-161, but before it would be published,

I received a letter from Vicken Yegparian of Toms River, New Jersey. In this introductory letter, dated June 16, 1994, Vicken (paraphrased here) had this to say:

"I read about your interest in Bungtowns in the *C4 Newsletter*, but I'd first heard about you from Mark Hotz, who was telling me that you have some pretty neat counterfeits in your collection. As I am interested in the same crazy stuff, I decided that I'd write! Let me tell you now that I'm only 17 years old, so that you're not surprised if we should ever happen to run in to each other at a show."

"'Bungtowns' is a good catch-all phrase but, as a collector, I prefer to call each kind of imitation as it is. For example, I prefer to use terms like 'contemporary imitation counterfeit' or 'Regal Evasion.' I find that Bungtown is too vague when I want to know exactly what a coin is, although it is a good word to use with dealers who are not familiar with the subject."

"I have about 60 to 65 contemporary imitation counterfeits in my collection, as well as about 40 Regal Evasions. I also have a small handful of Evasion/Conder token mules. For some odd reason, I've found myself collecting die pairings of William Lutwyche's store card – D&H Warwickshire 219. It seems to be an endless chain."

"My counterfeit collection is pretty well spread over the more common 'generic' pieces, such as the 1775s. I also have a few nice errors, mules, as well as a few of the crude pieces which Anton ascribes as 'American.' I find it hard to call these pieces 'American,' but I like their crudity just the same. Maybe we could compare notes, to see what one another's needs are information wise?"

From this first letter, it was quite apparent that Vicken possessed both knowledge and wisdom beyond his years. Being 20 years my junior, I also found his youthful enthusiasm to be an inspiration for me. This would be the beginning of numerous exchanges between Vicken and myself – that would eventually lead to an Evasion / counterfeit link.

Among my scant collection of Conder tokens I'd managed to come up with one piece that would be a link in Vicken's Lutwyche store card chain. Since I had liked his use of the word "generic" [Editor's Note: Vicken credits Ed Sarrafian for introducing this term to him.] to describe the better made and / or more common varieties of British counterfeit halfpence, I adopted this term for myself, and I sent Vicken this link for his chain, without any charge. It just seemed to be a better word than Mike Ringo's use of "normal" to describe the better made pieces that used punches and an obvious skilled hand in their manufacture. Although there may be a few rare varieties among such pieces, as a whole they are much more numerous than crudely styled counterfeits. I had thought of perhaps calling these "standard" counterfeits, but Vicken's "generic" still seemed the best choice of the three.

As suggested by Anton and Kesse, many of these Generic counterfeits undoubtedly would link to the Evasions and Conders. Technically, therefore, they could also be classed as Evasion Hybrids, although in the case of button manufacturer Peter Kempson, whose Evasions did not directly link with outright counterfeits, but his Conder output linked with both his Evasions and the counterfeits, I would suppose that a few of these Generic issues might be classed as Conder Hybrids, rather than Evasion Hybrids. This die and punch linkage would seem the easier puzzle to solve, but what of the crudely styled counterfeits, especially those that were hand engraved, such as Mike Ringo's "spidery lettered" counterfeits?

Over the course of our next several correspondences, Vicken and I indulged in several very detailed discussions covering topics from his Conder/Evasion chain to Blacksmith tokens. Vicken had developed his own theories and hypotheses concerning these topics, and I would think it fair to say that his analytical abilities were on par or surpassed those of many a researcher. Of course,

we also compared notes on Evasions, by Atkins numbers, that we each possessed, and I also explained my Evasion Hybrid and Anonymous counterfeits concepts to him.

In one such lengthy exchange, dated August 4, 1994, Vicken would mention that he had come across a few of the crude ("spidery lettered") so-called "American" counterfeits, and that, "Until I had found an Evasion at the Detroit ANA Convention this past July that had a similar crude reverse, I wasn't quite sure of this connection that you were talking about. Now, once and for all, it is obvious that this style of counterfeits are just very crudely executed British counterfeits, at least in my book!" Not sitting in front of a mirror, I would not be able to describe the look on my face when I read this brief mention contained within Vicken's two page letter. Had Vicken discovered the "missing link?!" For the next several months Vicken and I would continue our discussions about counterfeits and related issues, and how they may or may not be related. Not until after TN-161 had been published and the new year had begun, would Vicken again make mention of this "missing link." However, this time it would be more than a mention, it would be the focus of the beginning of a series of discussions on this topic.

In this first such discussion, Vicken would state in his letter dated January 2, 1995, that, "I enjoyed your *CNL* article – it's a step in the right direction. It would be great if we could document every die pairing with counterfeits, but it would be an enormous task."

"One thing which I think should have been included in the article (for the benefit of those not familiar with the Evasion series) is a photo of an Evasion muling of a so-called 'American' style die with an Evasion die. One example with which I am familiar is Atkins-95, which has the crude 'American' style on the reverse. This would have been a blatant example of an Evasion Hybrid!" (See Figures 14 through 16)

In my response to Vicken, dated the 9th, I would ask him if he would mind sending me his Atkins-95, "just to look and compare with the reverse designs of my crudely styled counterfeits? Who knows, it could just be the 'missing link' that I've been looking for!" I went on to say that I had been putting together small groupings of counterfeits "that I am almost certain would have been made by the same hand(s)," including a group of these wildly hand engraved pieces with the "spidery letters" that I had also found many examples of among Anton's plates.

Vicken would send his example of Atkins-95 to me later that month, along with another piece that he'd thought I might like to see, stating, "It mules a Generic English obverse with a so-called 'American' crudely styled reverse. I hope that these two coins will help in your research."

When I first examined the reverse of the Evasion, I thought that I might be looking at a duplicate of the Anton No. 15 / Weston No. 1 reverse. Further comparison with an upgrade example of Anton-15, and the Anton plate photo, would show that although they were, in fact, very similar, they were not an exact match. Another very similar piece that I found among my examples of this style, would also prove to be very similar to the overall style of the reverse of Atkins-95.

To me, at least, the similarities in the reverse design elements of this Evasion and the two crude counterfeit halfpence is quite apparent, just as it had been to Vicken. I now had little doubt that Vicken had been on the right trail all along.

I also found Vicken's Generic/Crude mule to be of great interest. Another such mule I had also found among Anton's plates, Anton No. 28. (See Figures 17 and 18.) In his *DESCRIPTIVE KEY*, Anton had this to say about this mule:



Figure 14: Atkins-95. An Evasion showing an obvious crude hand engraved reverse design that the author believes is very similar to that of Anton-15, and that of another piece in his collection. [Shown 1.5X actual size.] *From the author's collection.*



Figure 15: Anton-15, Weston-1. A crude counterfeit halfpenny that Anton ascribes as American, based on its design style. [Shown 1.5X actual size.] *Courtesy of William T. Anton.*



Figure 16: Weston-2. Another crude counterfeit halfpenny with a similar reverse design style to that of Anton-15, that the author believes may be related to Atkins-95. [Shown 1.5X actual size.] *From the author's collection.*

A very unusual specimen, and the only one encountered to date. A George III halfpenny the obverse of which is of the English manufacturing style, fully letter punched; however, the reverse die was entirely cut by hand, bears the date 177?, and is undoubtedly of the American manufacturing style. The reverse die was much too large for a mating with the smaller obverse die. A guess as to its genesis might be that the obverse die traveled with someone from England to the colonies, where it fell into the hands of the reverse die maker who married the dies for a limited striking.

Naturally, I would again favor Vicken's point of view over that of Anton's. This mulling of styles, for me, was an indication that the maker of these much cruder "spidery lettered" counterfeits either worked alongside the same token and button manufacturers who had made the more Generic style counterfeits, or, at least, had had some dealings with them. Another bit of evidence that would perhaps support this hypothesis is the more stylistic reverse of Vicken's mule. Perhaps this design had been improved upon by a more skilled craftsman, before it was used with the better made Generic obverse.

The maker of these crude "Simian" style counterfeits, with the "spidery letters," also seems to have experimented with his own skills as a "free hand" die engraver. (*Although the letter style is a key identifier of this style, and the engraver, I believe that my newly adopted terminology of "Simian style," from the Griffiee*



Figure 17: Vicken No. 1. A counterfeit halfpenny that Vicken Yegparian believes to be a muling of a Generic obverse and Crude (Simian) reverse, both of English origins. [Shown 1.5X actual size.] *Courtesy of Vicken Yegparian.*



Figure 18: Anton No. 28. Anton's English/American mule, which he believes to be a muling of styles indigenous to both England and North America. [Shown 1.5X actual size.] *Courtesy of William T. Anton.*

Sale, is a better descriptive term of the overall style of these pieces). These variances are usually only minor and are likely nothing more than perhaps "variations on a theme" of this engravers' skill. Two other such Simian style examples (see Figures 19 and 20) that I presently possess would perhaps bear this out.

Upon reviewing Vicken's letter of January 2nd, it suddenly occurred to me that Vicken had viewed this Evasion, Atkins-95, as the "Hybrid." This made me realize that I had been looking at this hybridization in a linear sense, assuming that British Evasions had been made first and that the outright counterfeits were a secondary consideration among the token and button manufacturers. Obviously, this may not have been true, at least not in every case. At this point in our research, I wasn't sure if or what implications this difference in perceptions may have.

Other examples of what I believed to be indicative of this Simian style could be found among Anton's photo-plates – all of

which Anton had ascribed as American. From the haphazard combinations of dies, dates and/or mulings, I surmised that this engraver not only experimented with his skills but perhaps had also had some degree of apathy towards his work. These "combinations" had also led me to suspect that perhaps this engraver's age, eyesight or a pint or two of "grog" may have played a role in their manufacture. I do believe that it is quite obvious that he did not learn from his mistakes and probably was not an apprentice. (See Figure 21.)

Naturally, I was quite excited about these preliminary analyses, and could not wait to get a letter off to Gary Trudgen telling him of Vicken's discovery and our respective analyses. I emphasized to Gary that I believed that this Evasion, Atkins-95, Anton No. 15 / Weston No. 1, and other similar counterfeit halfpence and farthings may represent the work of one person, and, that this may perhaps be a good follow-up to TN-161.

As everyone knows, February is the shortest month of the year, but, on rare occasions, a lot can happen during this month – and this was going to be one of those years! Gary would get back to me in a letter dated February 11, 1995, saying, "I agree that the artistic style of Atkins-95 and Anton No. 15 are very similar and probably came from the same hand. Yes, I believe you should pursue



Figure 19: Weston No. 3. Another Simian style counterfeit halfpenny displaying a longer olive (right) arm and a short pole (left) arm. Plain reverse border. [Shown 1.5X actual size.] *From the author's collection.*



Figure 20: Weston No. 5. This Simian displays the opposite of Weston No. 3, with a short "stumpy" olive arm and a much longer pole arm. The reverse border of this variety also consists of denticles. [Shown 1.5X actual size.] *From the author's collection.*

The reverse die was cut by the same person (legend is hand cut) who prepared the dies for Weston 2, 3, 4 and 5. The obverse, however, is a higher quality die with punched legends.

3. Atkins-95, as you know, is also a mule where an Evasion obverse is combined with a counterfeit halfpenny. The reverse die of Atkins-95 was cut by the same person who prepared the dies for Weston 2, 3, 4 and 5 and Vicken's halfpenny reverse die.

4. None of the dies of the subject coins are the same."

"I believe that Atkins-95 establishes a stylistic link between a group of crude counterfeit halfpence and British Evasions. This infers that the group of crude counterfeit halfpence are British in origin. If a counterfeit halfpenny is found employing the same reverse die used to strike Atkins-95, then this die linkage would leave little doubt that this group of crude counterfeit halfpence are British in origin. I do not plan to have filmprints made because I feel there would be little gained since the legends and dates are hand cut into the dies of this group of crude counterfeit halfpence. Let's hope that the reverse die of Atkins-95 is found in combination with a counterfeit halfpenny obverse." (Please note that Weston No.4 is pictured later in this section as Figure 23.)

this possible connection and I'm willing to help. I have the equipment to photograph the coppers in question if you and Vicken will send them to me."

I think it would have been an understatement to say that by this time I was ecstatic about Vicken's discovery, and I'm sure this was quite apparent to both Gary and Vicken. In a phone conversation with Vicken, he did not hesitate in agreeing for me to send his two coins, along with my Simians, to Gary. And, within the week they were off!

By February 25th, Gary had completed his own very thorough analyses of Vicken's and my Simians. Gary's analyses were as follows: "I have spent several hours of enjoyable study of these coins. Here are my findings:

1. Weston 2, 3, 4, and 5 are all different dies cut by the same hand. Unfortunately, the legends and dates are also hand cut, eliminating the possibility of punch link study using filmprints.

2. Vicken's halfpenny is a mule.

**Anton No. 10:** ½d 1772**Anton No. 49:** ½d 1773/33 overdate**Anton No. 60:** ½d 1762 Geo. II**Anton No. 80:** ½d 1775 Geo. II**Anton No. 90:** ¼d 1773**Anton No. 93:** ¼d 1752 Geo. II**Anton No. 100:** ¼d 1777?**Anton No. 101:** ¼d 1737 Geo. III**Anton No. 103:** ¼d 1773

Figure 21: Additional examples of both halfpence and farthings from the Anton photo-plates that the author believes are indicative of the Simian counterfeits style. [Shown actual size.] *Courtesy of William T. Anton.*

Immediately following Gary's analyses was another letter dated February 26th, which arrived the next day – obviously, I was not the only one to become excited by Vicken's discovery. Gary went on to say: "This is a follow-up letter to the one I wrote yesterday. I tried to compare the punches used to sink the legends of the Atkins-95 obverse and the obverse of Vicken 1. If the same punches were used, this would further tie the subject crude counterfeit halfpence group to a British Evasion, the Duke of Yorke. Unfortunately the obverse die of Vicken 1 was failing when it was combined with the crude counterfeit halfpenny reverse. This die failure has caused weakness in the legend making it difficult to do an accurate comparison. To accurately verify this punch connection we need to study more coins of these two varieties. I have searched through my photo collection of counterfeit halfpence and the Anton-Kesse plates looking for the reverse die of Atkins-95 combined with a counterfeit halfpenny. No luck! However, I do find several counterfeit halfpence

that are probably from the same crude group that you are studying. It appears that the counterfeiters responsible for these crude halfpence were very productive."

I took Gary's use of the plural *counterfeiters* to mean that he agreed that the engraver of these Simian style counterfeits was working with other counterfeiters – not that two people used this same style. I also recognized that to support a scientific burden of proof, that one of two possibilities must exist:

1. A counterfeit employing the same reverse design as Atkins-95 must be found, or
2. Punch linkage with a mule, such as Vicken No. 1 or Anton No. 28, and the Atkins-95 obverse lettering would also prove this undeniable connection.

Now going into March of 1995, I returned Vicken's example of Atkins-95 and his Generic/Simian mule, along with copies of Gary's analyses of February 25th and 26th. In his response, dated March 10th, Vicken would have this to say: "Thanks for your and Gary's letters. I have gone over them several times. Since I have not seen Weston #'s 2 through 5, I cannot make much comment on those, but I do know what Weston No. 1 / Anton No. 15 looks like from your CNL article and from Anton's book. I agree with Gary's observation that Atkins-95 is stylistically linked with this counterfeit variety. Although Vicken 1 is crude, I believe it is distinct from the reverse of Atkins-95 and Anton No. 15 because of the way Britannia's shield and arms are different. This is not to say that these two coins were not made by the same maker. These could have been made over a span of a number of years and the engraver's style could have changed over that time."

"Gary made the observation that letter punch links between the obverse of Atkins-95 and the obverse of my mule were a possibility. Taking a close look at those letters under 10, 20 and 30 power magnification, I would have to conclude that there is no punch linkage between these two varieties, although I wholeheartedly agree with Gary that higher grade examples are needed for a definitive examination."

Vicken went on to question me as to whether Atkins-96 and 97 had the same obverse die as Atkins-95. For this I did not have an answer because Atkins' numbering scheme combined obverses and reverses as a single number. There was no sure way to tell what differences there may be, other than the obvious legend differences of the reverses, unless, of course, you possessed an example of each. More specifically, Vicken was also curious as to whether there might be a connection between crude Irish counterfeit halfpence and Atkins-97, similar to that between the Simian counterfeits and Atkins-95. He also wondered with what frequency these Simian counterfeits occurred in England.

Of course, these were all good questions, but I did not have an easy or fast answer for Vicken. However, over the course of the next several months we would be able to come up with some answers as our correspondences continued.

June would turn out to be another "fast paced" month, which is quite unusual in numismatic circles. Vicken had just graduated from high school and was making plans to attend college in New York City in the fall. He was concerned about what effect this may have on our joint research. As luck would have it though, this would also be the month that our first break, information wise, would come. At a Cleveland, Ohio area show I met dealer Tim Rhodes, who just happened to have a copy of "A journey through the Monkalokian rain forests in search of the Spiney Fubbaduck" for sale. Despite the ominous title, this was a monograph about British Evasions by Mullhulland Ignatious Cobwright of Beeston, England, published in August of 1993.

Although there were no photos, Cobwright had come up with a numbering scheme to identify both the obverse and reverse dies. This was a vast improvement over Atkins' scheme in that like dies could be identified by Cobwright's numbering scheme. It only took me a moment or two to find the Duke of Yorke Evasion halfpence, which were listed alphabetically by the obverse die legends, the same as Atkins had done:

D.0020. R. .DUKE OF .YORKE		
95. B.0500. f. BRITAN NIA.	d	1775
96. H.0005. h. HALFPENNY.		17-81
97. H.0110. h. HIBERNIA.		17-69

From Cobwright's numbering scheme it was quite apparent that Atkins-95, 96 and 97 all shared the same common obverse, designated by Cobwright as D.0020. This was the answer to one of Vicken's questions, but, without photos his second question about similarities between crude Irish counterfeit halfpence and Atkins-97 would remain unanswered for a time. Perhaps a clue to his third question about the frequency of Simians in England may lie in the fact that my original example of Anton No. 15 / Weston No. 1 had come from England.

Gary Trudgen had also been very involved in this research, although I believe he saw his role more as the "editor," analyzing the results of Vicken and my efforts. Vicken had sent both Gary and me foil impressions of his crude counterfeit halfpence during June, and now it was up to me to likewise disseminate this new information that I had found in Cobwright's monograph. Our joint efforts to locate evidence that would fulfill the criteria for a scientific burden of proof had not yet turned up anything concrete.

Gary also showed a great interest in British Evasions and was curious about Cobwright's monograph, just as Vicken was. I thought that I might write Mr. Cobwright to see if any of the limited 125 copies were still available so that Gary and Vicken could each have one of their own. Previous experience in dealing across the "Big Pond" had taught me that such transactions move only as fast as the mails, and this only being an inquiry it may be some time before I would have these copies – if any were still available.

Luck was again on my side as Mr. Cobwright informed me that several copies of "Old Spiney" were still available. Along with my order I wrote a letter apprising Mr. Cobwright of our research, including a few specific questions, one of those being: Do you know of any counterfeit English or Irish pieces using the same reverse design styles of Atkins-95 or 97?

The copies of "Spiney" arrived well ahead of Mr. Cobwright's response to my letter. In this response, dated October 25, 1995, Mr. Cobwright would have this to say: "Thank you for your interesting letter and my sincere apologies for this unconscionable delay in replying. I must plead pressure of work. You should know that my work is Evasive and the obtaining of it is also."

"Yes I believe you are correct in seeking reverse die links with A-95 and 97. Unfortunately these pieces are out on a limb, they don't die link to anything else in the Evasion field. Nonetheless it will be interesting to link them to a few straight forgeries. There are a number of crude straight forgeries that appear to be the work of the same hand. I see from my tray that I have about half a dozen of each, none in particularly fine condition."

Cobwright's casual response had given me plenty to think about, and the answers for Vicken's last two questions. Obviously, Cobwright also believed that there was a connection between these Evasions and several varieties of outright counterfeits. It could easily be inferred that crude English and Irish counterfeit halfpence could be found in England "*without particular effort to*

procure such pieces," just as the Machin / Atlee counterfeit halfpence had been for Sylvester S. Crosby, in America, in 1875. One might also surmise that connections between crude counterfeits and these Evasions, Atkins-95 and 97, had long been known to our British cousins, D. T. Batty and James Atkins in particular. Of course, this would also parallel the time frame in which American collectors were beginning to become caught up in the "crudeness equals American" equation. *"Oh Betts! Betts! You have much to answer for, and it appears that your contrition over the subject of making the Colonial (?) pieces is genuine, and the boys are willing to forgive you, but who pays the cost?..."* Ebenezer Mason, *Coin Collector's Herald*, September, 1881. (Taxay, p. 147)

It is also interesting to note that Cobwright had come across as many Irish counterfeits that shared characteristics with Atkins-97 as he had Simian style counterfeits that were similar to Atkins-95. Obviously, Vicken had also recognized the possibility of these two Evasions, Atkins-95 and 97, being somehow connected with counterfeit halfpence just from the differences in their reverse legends as listed by Atkins. Also, one of the foil impressions that Vicken had sent to both Gary and me, was of a crude Irish counterfeit dated 1781 that showed the characteristic "spidery" letters that are indicative of the Simian style counterfeits. This would indicate that the Irish counterfeits that were similar to Atkins-97 were made by the same individual that had engraved the Simian counterfeits. This might also suggest that the only true Evasion among these three Duke of Yorke halfpence was Atkins-96, with the HALFPENNY reverse, dated 1781. Vicken's perception of Atkins-95 and 97 being Evasion Hybrids would therefore be correct – not the Simian counterfeits, as I had supposed! Obviously there were some differences in the story behind these three Evasions. With Vicken now off to college, the connection between these crude Irish counterfeit halfpence and this Irish Evasion Hybrid, Atkins-97, remains yet unexplored. Although our combined efforts have understandably been put on hold, our vigilant search for Simians had turned up several additional specimens that would reaffirm our previous findings and perhaps add a few more pieces to this puzzle.

Our search had also turned up a second Crude/Generic mule, as well as a Crude/Generic mule (see Figure 22) that I believe to be connected to the engraver of the Simian counterfeits. This third example of a better made obverse combined with a crude, Simian style reverse, although well worn, does show enough diagnostics, the "B" of Britannia and an obvious square or rectangular shield, to be classed as a muling of these two styles. In fact, what diagnostics are present indicate that this reverse design is even more similar to the reverses of Atkins-95, Anton No. 15 and Weston

No. 2, than either Vicken No. 1 or Anton No. 28. It should also be noted that the obverse had been counterstamped with a heart or spade shaped countermark, of unknown significance.

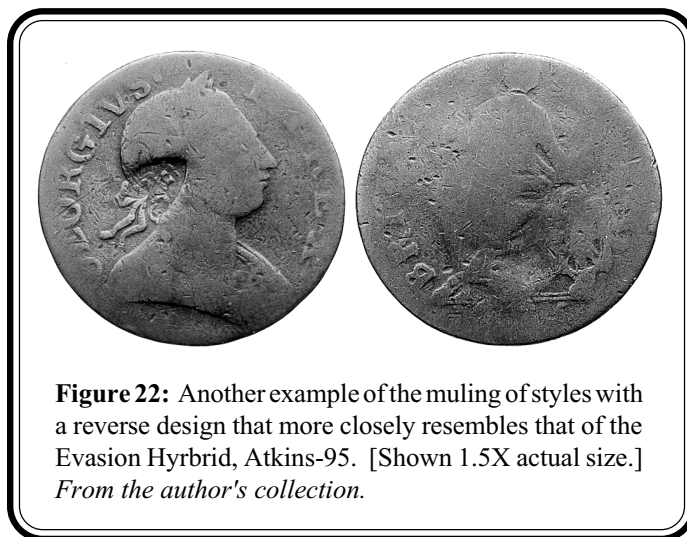


Figure 22: Another example of the muling of styles with a reverse design that more closely resembles that of the Evasion Hybrid, Atkins-95. [Shown 1.5X actual size.]
From the author's collection.

This second muling of a Crude obverse combined with a Generic reverse (see Figure 24) also has some problems with reverse wear. Still, the shield design clearly shows fimbriated crossbars and an overall better designed appearance than that of the Simians. This Crude obverse can also be classed as that was used by the engraver of the Simian style coun-



Figure 23: Weston No. 4. This obverse bust design closely resembles that of a newly discovered Crude/Generic mule. [Shown 1.5X actual size.] *From the author's collection.*



Figure 24: A muling of a Crude obverse design combined with a Generic, fimbriated crossbars, reverse design. The author believes that this obverse bears an uncanny resemblance to that of Weston No. 4, a Simian style counterfeit halfpenny. [Shown 1.5X actual size.] *From the author's collection.*



Figure 25: Anton No. 51. Anton implies that this combination of a Crude obverse design, married with a Generic reverse, would be considered an American/English mule, as opposed to an English/American muling of dies for his No. 28 (See Figure 18). [Shown 1.5X actual size.] *Courtesy of William T. Anton.*

terfeits due to its resemblance to the obverse of Weston No. 4 (see Figure 23). These two obverse bust designs are very close with differences in the placement of letters in the legends.

I had also noticed this combination of a Crude obverse design married with a Generic reverse among several examples on Anton's photo-plates. One such piece, Anton No. 51 (see Figure 25), is interesting in that Anton draws a parallel with his No. 28.

In his *DESCRIPTIVE KEY*, Anton had this to say: "A very rare 1733 George II halfpenny of American manufacture. Similar to plate coin No. 28's manufacture, this specimen's obverse was entirely hand-cut, while its reverse was letter punched."

I do not believe that the token and button manufacturers in England would have allowed these Generic obverse and reverse dies to have escaped their possession, not only because they would be cheating themselves out of the potential profit in creating counterfeit halfpence from these dies, but perhaps also in putting themselves at a greater risk of being discovered. Therefore, I disagree with Anton's assessment that these Generic obverse and reverse dies somehow made their way to America, to end up being combined with an opposing Crude die, creating transatlantic mules.

Our discoveries of additional Generic/Simian mules, Vicken No. 1 and Figure 22, and this Crude/Generic mule, Figure 24, would make Anton's scenario even less likely, also suggesting that such mulings occurred more often than previously thought. These mules

should be considered as part of the whole, the result of a less skilled craftsman's work being combined with that of a more refined opposing design, the same as in the case of the Evasion Hybrid, Atkins-95. These mules, themselves, more likely made their way to American shores the same way as many other British imports had, and it is doubtful that any English/American, or, American/English mules actually exist. To the contrary, these Crude and Generic mulings are further evidence that Crude counterfeits are of British origin.

There are another pair of interesting Simian counterfeit halfpence I believe may be linked to listings in Cobwright's monograph on the British Evasions. On page 9 Cobwright begins a listing of varieties that might be considered counterfeits as well as Evasions – i.e. "Sub-Evasions." Cobwright states: "These are forgeries with minor legend faults and/or dates for which regal pieces do not exist or are impossible. They are listed without description."

Since there are no photographs in Cobwright's monograph, these possible Simian counterfeit matches to this listing of "Sub-Evasions" can only be presented here as guesses. Obviously, Cobwright also does not have a complete or hard definition of what may constitute a British Evasion, which I believe was to be understood. Nonetheless, these Simian counterfeits do fit this criterion of "Sub-Evasions," and are important to this study regardless. From studying these two "Sub - Evasion" Simian counterfeit halfpence, it is also possible to infer that at least three varieties in this section of Cobwright's listings are also Simian style counterfeits. This is possible because of his numbering scheme which designates an alpha-numerical listing of each individual obverse or reverse die.

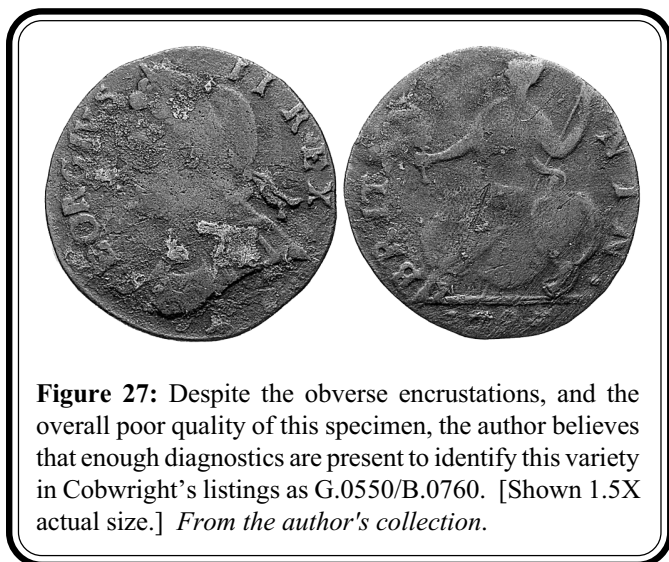
The first Simian counterfeit that I believe can also be considered as a "Sub-Evasion," is a George II specimen dated 1757 (Figure 26). This date is not one in which genuine regal issues were produced, as production of the George II, 2nd issue, British halfpence had ceased in 1754.

A second evasive dated Simian counterfeit halfpenny (see Figure 27), dated 1794, is at the other end of this spectrum. Married with a George II obverse die, the reverse also has Britannia misspelled as "Britannin." This misspelling and date, combined with a George II obverse, not only would class it as a "Sub-Evasion," but would also make this particular variety a match for Cobwright's G.0550/B.0760. Cobwright had also listed another variety dated 1793 (B.0750), with the same misspelling of Britannia, which is married with the same George II obverse (G.0550).



Figure 26: A George II, 1757 evasive date, Simian style counterfeit halfpenny that the author believes may also be listed in Cobwright's monograph on British Evasions as G.0506/B.0343. [Shown 1.5X actual size.] *From the author's collection.*

Although it is interesting that these two Simian counterfeit halfpence may also be known to Cobwright as "Sub-Evasions," they also give us a good idea of the range of dates that were used by the engraver for his output of these Simian style counterfeit halfpence. However, I do not believe that his endeavor to produce counterfeits had begun in 1757. Like the other George II varieties of this style that can be found among Anton's photo-plates, it is likely that none of these were produced during the reign of George II.



I believe that it is much more reasonable to assume that our friend, the engraver of these Simian counterfeit halfpence and farthings, may not have actually begun his career until he had become acquainted with his cohorts in the button or token manufacturing business. A clue as to when this may have occurred may lie in the Duke of Yorke British Evasion, Atkins-96. Since the dates of the two Duke of Yorke Evasion Hybrids, Atkins-95 and Atkins-97, could be presumed to be false, then the date of this true British Evasion, 1781, would seem a reasonable date for this acquaintance to have begun. Of course, this date would also preclude any George III Simian

counterfeits dated within the regal years of the genuine issues, 1770 to 1775, to likewise have been backdated.

From the 1794 date of the Simian "Sub-Evasion" halfpenny, with the George II obverse, it may also be assumed that this engraver might have continued his craft over a period of at least 13 years. This period of time would also coincide with the American Confederation era, and the Coppers Panic of 1789, during which time it would have been most likely that any Simian style counterfeit halfpence may have made their way to American shores. Although only a guess, should this postulation have any merit, then it might also be likely that the Simian style counterfeits were among those that had been described as "blatantly inferior" in England, in 1787, as well as being among those that were being described as "badly executed" in the March 5, 1787, New York legislative report.

Although the evidence gathered thus far can only be considered circumstantial, this possible connection between the crude, Simian style counterfeits and Atkins-95 would still seem to be undeniable. Until a few months ago, I was reluctant to present what evidence we did have as Vicken, Gary and I had not yet found the die or punch linkage necessary to support a scientific burden of proof. With some prodding from Gary, and a review of the evidence and postulations by Vicken, it is being presented now with the understanding that it must be considered, at best, incomplete. With the added help of our fellow CNL Patrons, I am certain that the final pieces to this puzzle will eventually make themselves known.

C'tft ½d & ¼d et al

Early on in my studies and growing fascination with these contemporary counterfeit halfpence and farthings, I'd realized that to learn as much as I could about them it would be necessary to gather together as many different varieties as possible. I believe that I have been very fortunate in this endeavor, and although there is duplication of several varieties, there is something that can also be gained from this. However, my personal interests were in what stories individual varieties might tell. This would obviously be no easy task, but I have found that when certain varieties are either looked at as part of the whole, or are compared with another variety, some of these "coins" can speak very loudly.

Several very relevant observations have already been made about these coppers by Charles W. Smith in his October 28, 1995, address before the American Numismatic Society, as part of the *Coinage of the Americas Conference*, in New York City. His paper, entitled "The English George III Contemporary Counterfeit Halfpenny Series: A Statistical Study of Production and Distribution," had both reaffirmed and had also brought into question several of the facts that we have previously been taught about these coppers. In this third and final section I will attempt to build on the work of Dr. Smith who, I believe, has laid a very sound foundation to a better understanding of these coppers.

I'm convinced that the majority of counterfeit halfpence and farthings were, in fact, produced after the genuine George III regal issue ceased production in 1775. It should not, however, be overlooked that many counterfeit halfpence and farthings were produced within the regal years of 1770 to 1775. Along with the British counterfeits must be included the Irish counterfeits that were obviously made by the same individuals, who were either in the token or button manufacturing business, or were working independently elsewhere in England, or, perhaps, Ireland as well. But how does one determine when a specific variety of counterfeit may have been produced?

As stated by Smith: "One must keep in mind that the date on a counterfeit coin represents only the earliest hypothetical date of circulation and not necessarily its actual earliest date of circulation or its date of production." Smith had also hypothesized that the technology necessary to produce

state-of-the-art counterfeits equivalent in quality to that of the Royal Mint output of genuine issues was available to at least some of the counterfeiters. One might assume that this technology may not have been available until later years, perhaps even after the production of genuine halfpence and farthings had ended.

Smith's statistical analyses revealed that the least produced date was 1770, for the genuine as well as the counterfeit halfpence. Logically, one might assume that counterfeits bearing this date could have very likely been produced in 1770. But what proof do we have of this? It is only when we compare a counterfeit halfpenny dated 1770 to a genuine example that an answer is revealed.

If the two specimens shown in Figures 28 and 29 were circulated, it would obviously be increasingly difficult to distinguish the genuine halfpenny from the



Figure 28: A high grade, well made counterfeit halfpenny dated 1770. Peck Plate 50, coin x. [Shown 1.5X actual size.] *From the author's collection.*



Figure 29: A genuine George III, 1st issue, halfpenny dated 1770. Peck 893. [Shown 1.5X actual size.] *From the author's collection.*

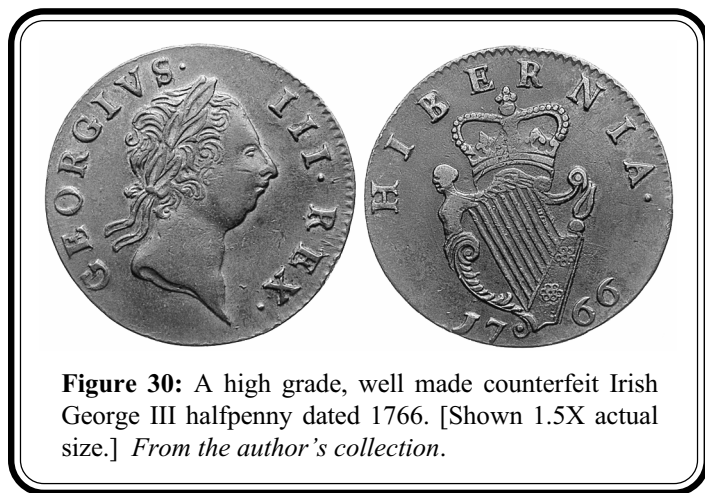


Figure 30: A high grade, well made counterfeit Irish George III halfpenny dated 1766. [Shown 1.5X actual size.] *From the author's collection.*

counterfeit as they wore. Even with very little circulation, the counterfeit deserves a second look because its obverse bust design is very similar to the genuine and their outlines are virtually identical.

Dealing in probabilities and using only this most rudimentary of scientific methods, the eyeball comparison, these two halfpence, one genuine and the other a counterfeit, reveal a remarkable degree of skill and craftsmanship on the part of the

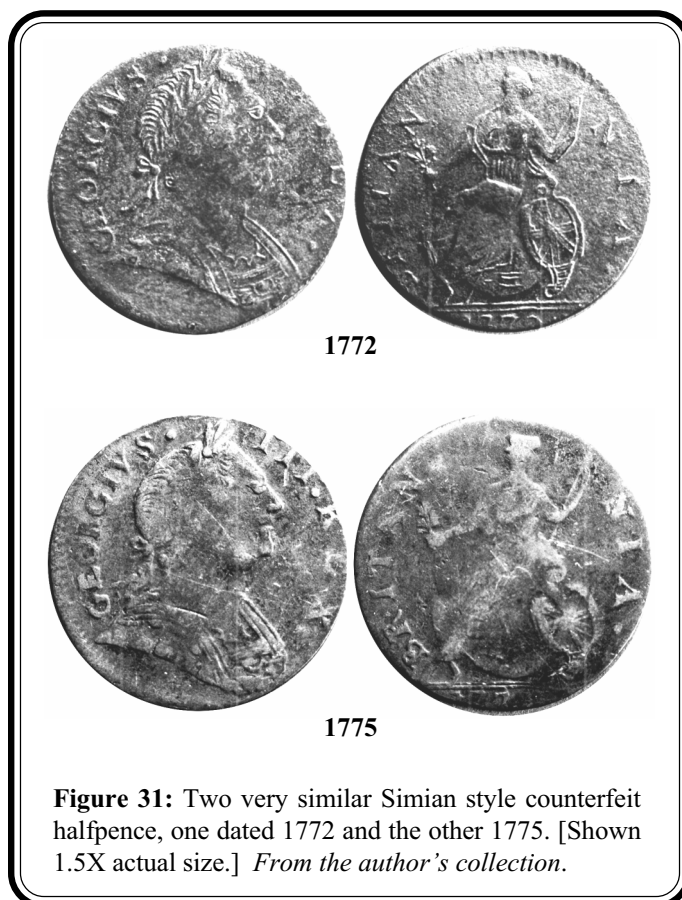
engraver of the counterfeit to duplicate the design of a genuine specimen. Since 1770 was the first year of issue for the genuine George III British halfpence, it could easily be surmised that this particular die engraver took special care in duplicating the design of this new genuine issue.

Following this line of reasoning, it could also be inferred that this particular variety of counterfeit might very well have been made during the year for which it is dated – 1770. This would also support Smith's hypothesis that the technology may already have been in place to produce a very reasonable facsimile when the genuine George III issue began. The purpose of the George III, 1st issue halfpence, to drive the George II counterfeits from circulation, was essentially defeated almost at the very instance that the genuine issue began to circulate in 1770. Of course, these technologically advanced counterfeiters, perhaps working in the token or button manufacturing business, might have been honing their skills producing die struck George II counterfeits as well as the Irish George III halfpence (Figure 30), which began in 1766. These well practiced counterfeiters might have been ready and waiting for this new issue of George III British halfpence.

As was also noted by Smith, the production of counterfeits did not begin in earnest until the following year – 1771. The exceptionally well made counterfeits quickly became the aberration as more and more people tried their hand at imitating this new issue. A new counterfeiting law, also passed in this year, now made counterfeiting a felony and extended to both buyers and sellers of counterfeit coins, not just the counterfeiters of such coins, led Smith to the conclusion that there was an exodus of these "coins" to the American Colonies. Although Smith's statistical analyses were an ambitious effort, well over 200 years after the fact, the difference in percentages of 1771 dated counterfeits between the "U. S. Collection," 13.8%, and his "English Study Collection," 4.3%, does seem to make this hypothesis a very plausible one. As will be discussed later, this may not have been the only instance where a specific group of counterfeit halfpence, or even specific varieties may have been tagged specifically for export.

This new counterfeiting law did seem to have some effect in England, as Smith noted a slight reduction in counterfeits dated 1772. It must also be kept in mind that the date on a counterfeit has only limited significance as it could have been produced years later and backdated. My own observations with the Simian style counterfeits, which were most likely produced years after the genuine regal issues had ended, reveals that the second most common date among the George III Simian style counterfeit halfpence is 1772.

The two Simian counterfeits shown in Figure 31 were likely engraved very close together. Although, as individual varieties, Simian counterfeits can be considered scarce or even rare, when



several different varieties come together there is an accumulative effect that reveals a greater truth. This observance would also suggest that the effect of the new counterfeiting law may have been even greater than Smith's statistical analyses had revealed. We now know that at least some of those counterfeits dated 1772 may not have been produced until years, perhaps even a decade or two later.

For some inexplicable reason counterfeiting seems to have picked up again in 1773 and 1774, or, at least, Smith's date analyses reveal a substantial increase in counterfeits bearing these dates. I believe that this is where the statistics combined with the practice of backdating may have put logic askew.

Smith's two previously mentioned study groups, one of 60 specimens coming primarily from American sources and the other of 300

specimens that Smith had gathered in England, both show a marked increase of nearly sixfold the number of 1773 and 1774 dated counterfeit halfpence as compared to those dated 1772. Smith's analogy between these two dates is that "the exchange of the order of 1773 and 1774 examples in frequency of occurrence is probably not statistically significant in a population of this size." In other words, the populations of these two dates in American as well as English collections are virtually the same, and there is a nearly equal quantity of 1773 dated counterfeits as there are 1774 dated specimens.

I do not believe that this sudden sixfold increase from one year to the next (1772 to 1773) should be considered a contemporaneous one. It is far more likely that there may have been a gradual increase in counterfeiting activity over the last three years of the regal issues, 1773, 1774 and 1775. Although it is most likely for 1775 dated counterfeits to have been backdated, it can not be overlooked that a substantial number of the latter day (after 1775) counterfeiters may have simply chosen dates that were within the second half of the six year series of regal issues. Since there is no certain way of telling the difference between a backdated counterfeit and one that is produced in the year for which it is dated, we should not rely too heavily on these statistics. What Smith's statistical analyses tell us is not how many counterfeits were produced during a particular year but what dates were favored, for one reason or another, by the counterfeiters.

One statistic that cannot be overlooked is the number of 1775 dated counterfeits. Smith's analyses reveal that in nearly every date distribution study, with the exception of the "U. S. Collection" (40%), that 1775 dated counterfeits comprised at least 50% of each study group. At the most, I would guess that no more than 20% of these 1775 dated counterfeit halfpence were



Figure 32: A closed loop 5 (5/6?) counterfeit halfpenny. (Compare with Figures 1 and 34.) [Shown 1.5X actual size.] *From the author's collection.*



Figure 33: Enlargement of the date area of Figure 32 showing the closed loop 5.

actually struck in 1775, with the remaining 80% having been made in later years. I believe this is a very realistic assumption, although it cannot be proven. This estimate would, however, be in line with a gradual increase of counterfeiting activity throughout the remaining three regal years.

There is one very novel way of telling approximately when some of these 1775 dated counterfeit halfpence may have actually been made. These are the closed loop 5 counterfeits. Smith's hypothesis differs from my own concerning these pieces. Smith believes that the counterfeiters may have been hedging their bets that the Royal Mint might not continue producing the genuine coin into 1776 by designing a 5 that looks like a 6. He also believes that the counterfeiters also produced 1776 dated

pieces in anticipation that the Royal Mint would continue the series. My own theory is that the counterfeiters did not anticipate the George III, 1st issue halfpence and farthing series ending in 1775. I do agree, however, that 1776 dated counterfeits may have been made either late in 1775 or early 1776 in anticipation of the series continuing. This leaves us with just one question; did the counterfeiters have any way of knowing that this series would end in 1775, or continue into 1776?

Since there was a marked drop-off in the number of genuine 1775 pieces produced by the Royal Mint, perhaps Smith's hypothesis may not be totally without merit, however, we cannot be sure that this reduced production of genuine issue halfpence was noticed by the counterfeiters at the time.

Besides, what difference would it have made should these counterfeits had simply been dated 1775? I believe that it was more likely that most counterfeiters anticipated only that this series would continue, and that these closed loop 5 counterfeits were originally dated 1776, then corrected to make the already punched or engraved 6 into a 5. I must concede, however, that either scenario should be considered with equal merit, perhaps on an individual basis.



Figure 34: An example of Anton No. 21. Compare the basic design features with that of the specimens illustrated in Figures 1 and 32. [Shown 1.5X actual size.] *From the author's collection.*

Although we now know that the 1776 dated Machin / Atlee counter-

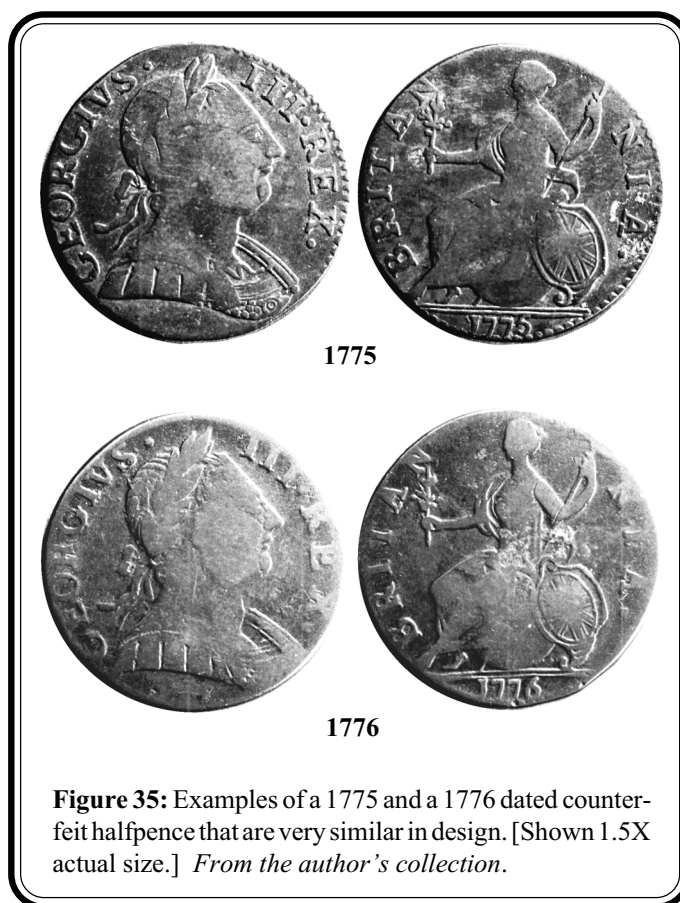


Figure 35: Examples of a 1775 and a 1776 dated counterfeit halfpence that are very similar in design. [Shown 1.5X actual size.] *From the author's collection.*

feit halfpence were made at least a decade later than their date, these 1776 dated English counterfeit halfpence are much more likely to have been made contemporaneously. Therefore, any counterfeit that can be associated with one of these 1776 English counterfeits would also have been made around the same time. As was noted by Jim Spilman, the closed loop 5 halfpenny illustrated in Figure 1 was "most like Anton No. 21." Interestingly, this is a 1776 dated counterfeit. (See Figure 34.)

Of course, one must speculate whether a 1775-dated specimen was made in 1775 before the 1776-dated specimen, or was made after the 1776 when the counterfeiter realized that there were not going to be any genuine 1776 halfpence (see Figure 35). Since Batty listed eight varieties of 1776-dated counterfeit halfpence, and I can find only 6 varieties listed by Cobwright in his section on "Sub-Evasions," the

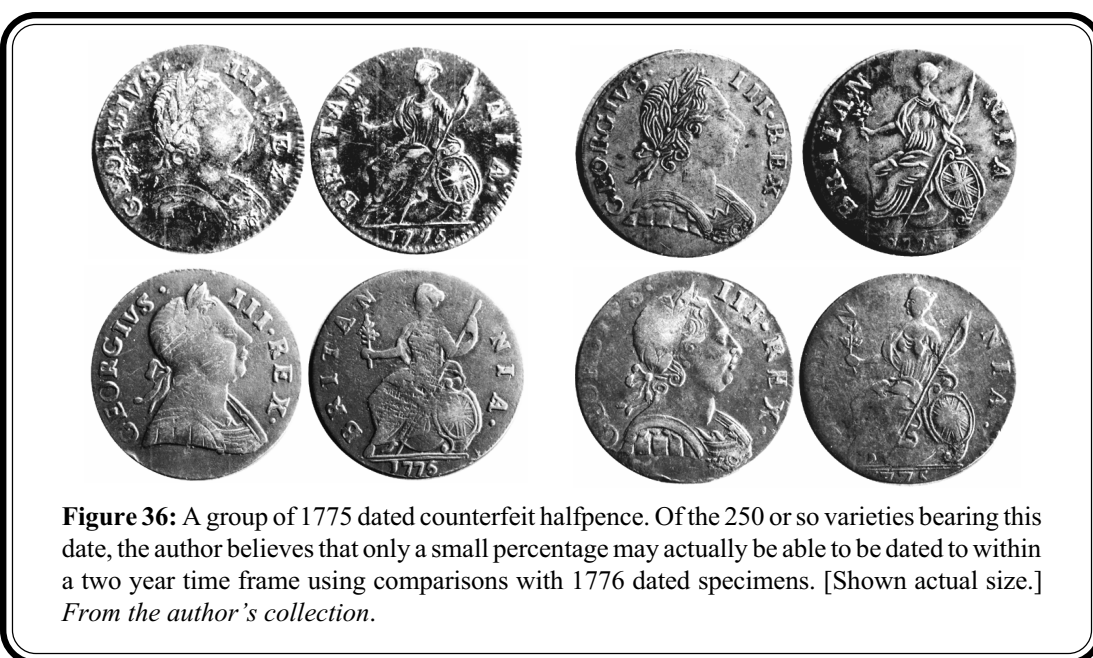


Figure 36: A group of 1775 dated counterfeit halfpence. Of the 250 or so varieties bearing this date, the author believes that only a small percentage may actually be able to be dated to within a two year time frame using comparisons with 1776 dated specimens. [Shown actual size.] *From the author's collection.*

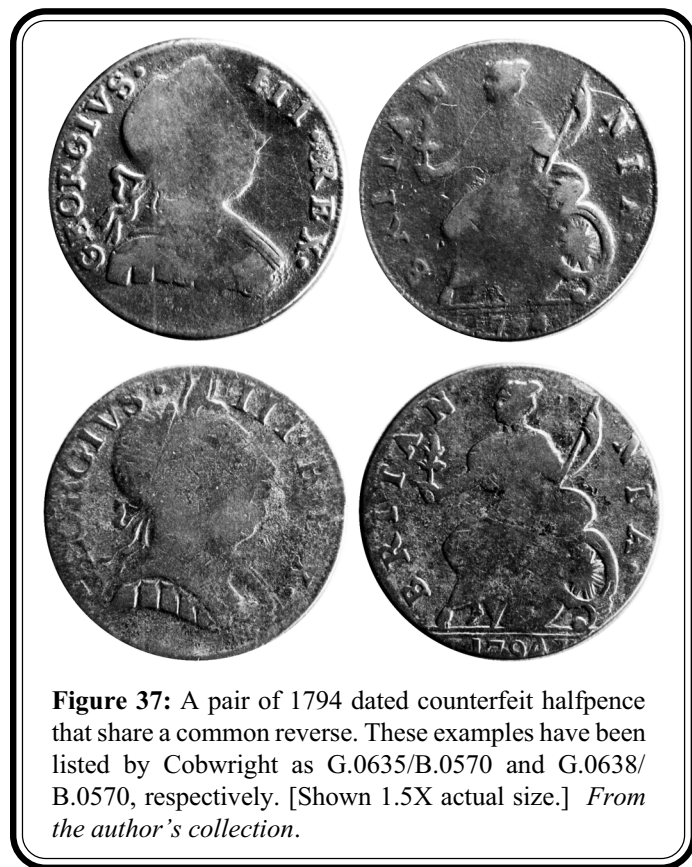


Figure 37: A pair of 1794 dated counterfeit halfpence that share a common reverse. These examples have been listed by Cobwright as G.0635/B.0570 and G.0638/B.0570, respectively. [Shown 1.5X actual size.] *From the author's collection.*

chances of making such links between a 1775-dated counterfeit and one dated 1776 are very slim. We do, at least, have some way of dating a few varieties of 1775-dated counterfeits to within a two year time frame, either 1775 or 1776. For the vast majority of 1775-dated counterfeit halfpence, we can only speculate whether they are contemporaneous or back-dated.

From contemporaneous accounts cited earlier in this paper, we know that the production of counterfeits, and their export to the former Colonies, increased exponentially after the Revolutionary War ended. Looking over all of the counterfeits used thus far in illustrating this paper, the great divergence in design styles can not be denied. We know that reasonably well made counterfeits were made throughout the period that this activity continued, perhaps well into the 19th Century. We also

know that specimens of the other extreme, the very crudely styled counterfeits, were likely made right alongside the better made counterfeits, as evidenced by the mulings of these two styles. We have also learned that provenance can no longer be randomly applied to a counterfeit based simply on its design style.

From the physical evidence, such as the 1775-dated counterfeit halfpenny over struck on the 1797 Palmer Mail Coach Token, we can be certain that this activity continued well after 1775. Also, we know from extant specimens, that the latest evasive date used on a counterfeit halfpenny is 1794. The two 1794 specimens illustrated in Figure 37, combined with the Simian style counterfeit halfpenny with the George II obverse illustrated earlier in this paper, Figure 27, make up the three varieties currently known to bear this date. It is very unlikely that this evasive dating of counterfeit halfpence occurred before the date used.

The fact that crudely styled counterfeits were being made in England should not be construed as applying to only the Simian style counterfeits. There are many other crudely styled counterfeits that must also be considered. Evidence suggests that crude counterfeits, other than the Simian style pieces, are likely to be of British or, perhaps, Irish origin.

The two particular varieties shown in Figure 38, although of an overall poor quality, are linked by a very distinct crude obverse design. This obverse bust design gives George III the appearance of having suffered from microcephaly, a congenital birth defect believed to be caused by German measles, resulting in an abnormally small head. (Although George III was one of the Hanoverian kings, any further analogy is left to the reader.) Persons suffering from this affliction were sometimes employed by circus sideshows where they were often referred to as "pinheads."



Figure 38: Two very crude counterfeit halfpence that share a common obverse design. One has a dateless British reverse while the other has an Irish harp design reverse dated 1769. [Shown 1.5X actual size.] *From the author's collection.*

Individually these varieties would not tell us much, but with this obverse die link with both Irish and British reverses there is much more to consider. Although there is the possibility that counterfeit halfpence were also produced in Ireland, it would most likely be that these varieties were produced somewhere in England. It would be least likely that they would be of American origin.

As was mentioned earlier, Smith infers that 1771 dated counterfeits were likely to have been exported to America in that year because of a new counterfeiting law that was passed in England. It would also not be a far stretch of the imagination that these counterfeits, in some cases, may have gone directly from the hands of the counterfeiters to a British brig headed for the Colonies. This may very likely have been what happened in later years as well.

I do not believe that it is reasonable to assume that all of the counterfeit George III halfpence exported during, at least, 30 years of this activity were random selections pulled from circulation. At any given time, the token or button manufacturers may have allocated a significant portion of their output of counterfeits specifically for export. The fact that Evasions or counterfeit farthings do not show up in American accumulations is an indication that the exporters were well aware of the needs and requirements of this overseas market. It was very likely a well organized effort, especially in the later years. It may have even been possible that the entire production of a single variety may have ended up on American shores. This possibility was first written about by Eric P. Newman in *ANS Museum Notes* 33, and was also expounded upon by Smith in his statistical analysis. Both Newman and Smith have concluded that known 1781 dated varieties of counterfeit halfpence circulated in both England and the American Confederation. Interestingly, this distribution of linked varieties would seem to parallel that of the crude Simian style counterfeits.

Concerning the 1785-dated varieties, again, both Newman and Smith conclude that these varieties circulated only in the former Colonies, but not in England, unlike the 1781 varieties. Other evidence presented by Anton & Kesse in *Forgotten Coins...* would suggest that both Newman and Smith were wrong about this difference in circumstances.

The 1785 variety shown in Figure 40, also attributed by C. Wyllys Betts as his No. 4 in 1886, was rediscovered by Mike Ringo and Gary Trudgen while they were looking through a group of unattributed counterfeit halfpence about a year before it was plated in *CNL*. This specimen is especially interesting in that its worn condition would suggest that 1785-dated varieties were used in early American commerce and circulated alongside other spurious pieces.



Figure 39: An example of the 1781 dated counterfeit halfpence varieties – Newman 42-81C. [Shown 1.5X actual size.] *From the author's collection.*



Figure 40: Newman 51-85B. "The Rediscovery Coin" CNL No. 70, page 909, June 1985. [Shown 1.5X actual size.] *From the author's collection.*

Newman had concluded that all of the 1785-dated varieties that were known to him circulated exclusively in America, but that they were made in England. This was confirmed by Smith in his personal search of private and museum collections in England, during which he did not find a single example of a counterfeit halfpence dated 1785.

Contrary to Smith's findings and Newman's postulation is Anton No. 25. Interestingly, this is a 1785 variety that was unknown to Newman, which Anton designates as Newman 52-85D. Even more interesting is that Anton had acquired his example in England, and that he knows of at least two others that "still repose in England." Obviously, Smith was unaware of or had overlooked this bit of evidence.

This new distribution of 1785-dated varieties draws a very critical parallel with another counterfeit halfpence variety that is well known to American collectors, Vlack 14-84A. This variety was first reported by D. T. Batty in England in 1886. Like the 1785-dated varieties,

it would at first appear that this variety was exclusively American, since the vast majority of specimens were found here. However, since design style cannot be considered an indication of provenance, Vlack 14-84A is just as likely to have been produced in England as the 1785-dated varieties, and, to have circulated *almost* exclusively in the former Colonies.

American bias towards crudely styled counterfeit halfpence being exclusively American in origin has been quite apparent during the last several years. So much so that when a new variety has come to light, any possibility of it being anything but American in origin has not even been considered. Not only is this a mere misconception, it is a myth. The accumulative evidence presented in this paper would suggest that just the opposite is true. It is far more likely that a crudely styled counterfeit is of British origin rather than American. The "statistics" have changed.

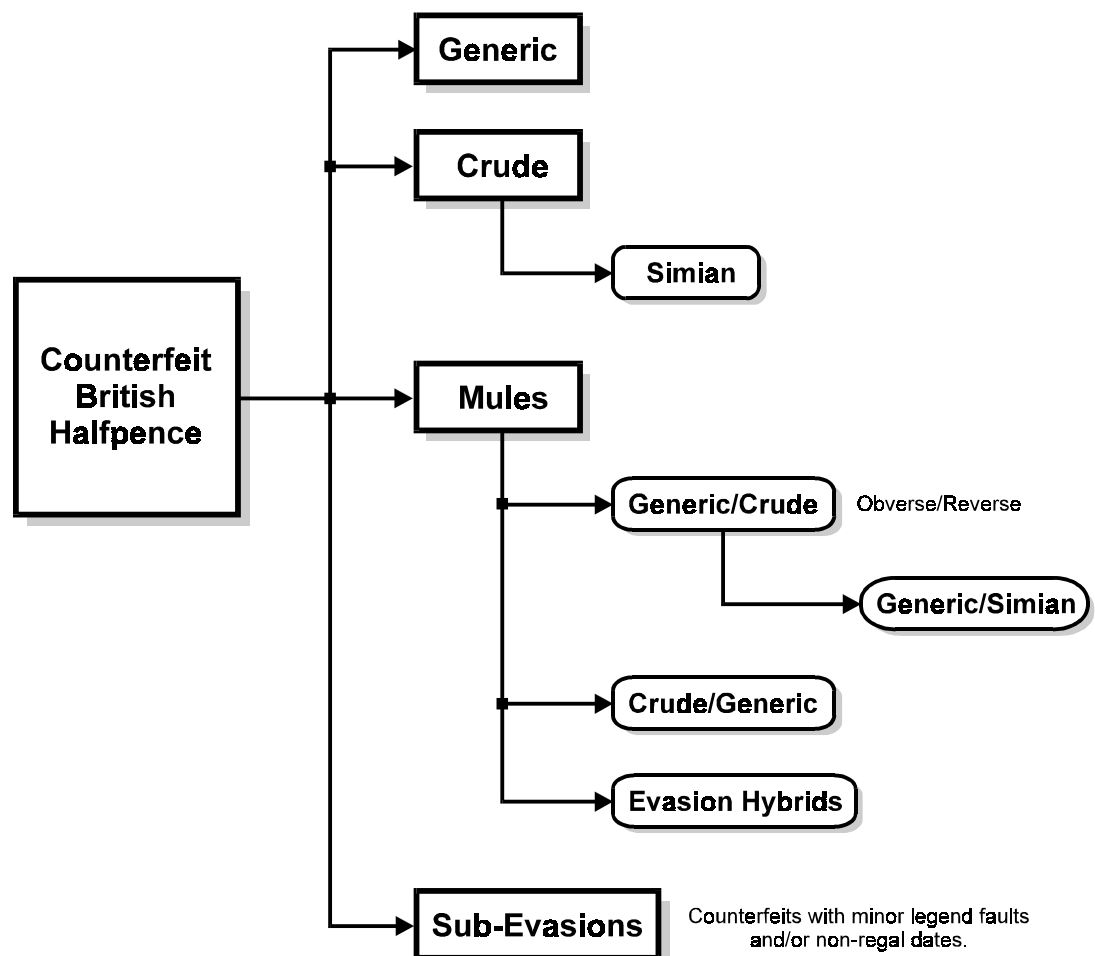
We also cannot overlook the distinct possibility that several varieties of counterfeits may have been made in Ireland. Other evidence suggests that counterfeit paper currency had emanated from Ireland during the Colonial and Confederation eras. Also, William Mossip, Sr. and Jr., of Dublin were responsible for a series of tokens, as well as the North American Token. At some point it might have been possible counterfeit halfpence were produced in Ireland, relative to those that were being made in England. Although this is for now only a "feeling," further research in this area would no doubt prove fruitful.

The so-called Canadian Blacksmith series has been purposely excluded from this study since it is likely that these blatant counterfeits were produced in the early 19th Century. Comparisons based on planchet weights, edges or designs should be made with a caveat. These are a different animal from those that have been discussed here. I am as enamored with this series as are many other collectors of counterfeits, and I look forward to giving them further study.

The deceptions perpetrated by the counterfeiter, in most cases, remain intact. However, there is also no longer any reason or need for us to delude ourselves. If we collectors cannot positively label a counterfeit either American or British in origin, then we should label it as it is – “Anonymous.”

CNL

STRUCK COUNTERFEIT BRITISH HALFPENCE TYPES



Note: Provenances include American-made, Anonymous and British-made.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

American-made Counterfeit Halfpenny: Any counterfeit halfpenny that can be linked through die or punch linkage with one of the various state coinage series produced during the Confederation era, or linked to another counterfeit halfpenny, or series of halfpence, of indisputable American provenance.

This category is currently limited to a group of counterfeit halfpence that are commonly referred to as Machin's Mills imitation halfpence. Although this group is linked through punch linkage and die sharing of obverses and reverses with the state coinages of Connecticut and Vermont, and are undoubtedly of American provenance, more recent evidence suggests that they are not all of a common origin. Beyond this physical evidence, the factor common to them all would seem to be the person of James F. Atlee, which might suggest that they should perhaps be more properly referred to, as a group, as Atlee's Imitations.

More recent thinking concerning counterfeit halfpence has suggested that a Crude design style is an indication of American provenance – this has proven to be a myth. Although this allowance has been made in the study of Generic style British counterfeits, design style has not been relied upon by itself, but in combination with other evidence, such as die sharing or mulings, as well as punch link studies. Only when it might be considered blatantly obvious could design style comparisons be considered only one of the factors in suggesting a possible origin.

Anonymous Counterfeit Halfpenny: Any counterfeit halfpenny that cannot be positively linked either through die and/or punch linkage, die sharing and design style, with another counterfeit of known British or American provenance, or related British or American series. (These criteria are subject to modification upon further study.)

Possible links with other contemporaneous series, such as the British Evasion and/or the Conder token series [Editor's Note: Currently there are no known Conder / halfpenny mules, but this is an area of continuing research.] must also be taken into consideration as they often share common origins with most British counterfeits, through die and punch linkage, as well as by design style. Design style similarities should not, in most cases, be relied upon by themselves, but in combination with other evidence. Likewise, possible links with the various state coinage series, produced in America during the Confederation era, must also be considered, but only within these same rigorous restrictions.

Although it is a well established fact that the vast majority of counterfeit halfpence varieties are British in origin, many of the Crude styled pieces, especially those that have been engraved partially or entirely by hand, can only be considered to be of Anonymous origin. As has been suggested by this study (p. 1969), the muling of Generic and Crude styles presents two possible exceptions, one being die linkage with an opposing Crude style die, the other being punch linkage with the opposing Generic style die, both in concert with one another. Until and unless such evidence linking a Crude styled counterfeit to an American and British provenance can be presented, it can only be considered Anonymous.

Planchet weight and edge comparison studies may have only limited relevance in establishing provenance. It should always be kept in mind that the counterfeiters were all imitating the same coin, the genuine British halfpenny, and most often little attention was paid to Royal Mint batch weight tolerances. Likewise, many state coinage issues were also in imitation of the George II and George III halfpence, and were counterfeited as well. It is this great diversity among British and

American counterfeit planchet weights that limits this relevance. Likewise, this diversity may also preclude evidence of the different planchet-cutting methods from having any relevance in similar comparison studies. Although it can be said that American Confederation era coinage generally have cut, round edges, and that genuine British halfpence have sheared, square edges, we cannot know what technology may have been available to the individual counterfeiter, or where the planchets that he used may have originated. (A discussion of The Planchet Cutter can be found within *CNL* pp. 788 - 797.) Not unlike design style, planchet weight and edges can only be considered part of the story.

Betts' Fantasy Issues: Fictitious coinage creations produced by C. Wyllys Betts beginning in 1860, numbering "nearly two hundred types," the majority of which were donated by Betts to the Yale University collection.

Although the evidence presented by Taxay suggests that there was no intent on the part of Betts to defraud, certain of his contemporaries considered the fact that these "counterfeits" even existed to be evidence that a genuine issue of a similar nature must also exist. Others ridiculed Betts even though he did make an effort to correct his release of some of these fantasies into collector channels. Interestingly, Sylvester S. Crosby seems to have taken a neutral stance on this issue, neither confirming nor refuting the status of Betts' creations.

This situation, that existed well over one hundred years ago, has raised the suspicion of this author as to the status of Vlack 16-86A and CT-86A. This author believes their source to possibly be Betts, and thus are not contemporary with their date.

British-made Counterfeit Halfpenny: Any counterfeit halfpenny that can be linked through either die and/or punch linkage, die sharing and design style, with the many varieties of British Evasions and/or the Conder token series.

It has been generally accepted that many of the better made, Generic style counterfeits, that use prepared letter and device punches and cannot be linked to matrixes of an American origin or usage, can be considered of British origin. Although this assumption can and has been made, as with any counterfeit halfpenny, it alone cannot be considered the determining factor in establishing provenance. Any possible American connection must first be eliminated.

These criteria in establishing a British provenance should also be extended to include Irish counterfeits.

Crude Style Counterfeits: Any counterfeit halfpenny that may have been described in contemporary accounts as "blatantly inferior" or "badly executed." Although subject to opinion and conjecture, generally any counterfeit that is lacking in resemblance to the genuine issue. As there is no defining line between Crude and Generic styles, this is perhaps the hardest design style to describe.

More often, this description can be applied to any counterfeit that employs hand cut letters, numbers or devices, either in part or in total, within its overall design. Obviously, a more diverse and detailed classification of this and other design styles needs to be developed.

As has been shown in this paper, die sharing, usually in combination with reasonable design style comparisons, has suggested that several varieties of Crude style counterfeits are connected to a series of British Evasions. This and other mulings of Crude and Generic style obverses and reverses suggest a British provenance for many of the Crude style counterfeits. It is reasonable to assume that Crude style counterfeits, other than the Simians, may also be of British origin.

Evasions (British): A series, or combination of several series of both halfpence and farthings, numbering nearly 500 varieties, that were created specifically to evade British counterfeiting laws regarding the imitation of genuine George II and George III halfpence and farthings. In order to avoid legal penalties, manufacturers made use of nonsensical legends, and legends which parodied popular events and personalities after 1776 and into the early years of the Napoleonic Wars.

The original work on this subject by James Atkins, *The Tradesmen's Tokens of the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1892 pp. 385 - 395), is rife with inaccuracies, perhaps due to Atkins' dependence on information from others. Also, Atkins' numbering scheme, employing a single number designation to a combination of both obverse and reverse dies, and arranged alphabetically by the obverse legends, leaves much to the imagination in determining potential links between specific Evasions. It should also be noted that Atkins' contemporary, D. T. Batty, was aware of Atkins' work and left the cataloging of Evasions to Atkins, not including them in his own *Descriptive Catalogue of the Copper Coinage of Great Britain, Ireland, British Isles, and Colonies*.

The more recent work on Evasions by Cobwright seems to have cleared up most of these inaccuracies, and his alpha-numerical numbering scheme of individual obverse and reverse dies exposes several links between not only the Evasions, but perhaps several links between what I have called "Sub-Evasions" and the outright counterfeits. Cobwright more astutely describes these "Sub-Evasions" as "...forgeries with minor legend faults and/or dates for which regal pieces do not exist or are impossible." Like the Evasions, these have also been assumed to be of British origin.

Evasion Hybrid (Halfpenny): Any counterfeit halfpenny that can be linked through either die and/or punch linkage, die sharing and design style, with the many varieties of British Evasions and/or the Conder token series.

This definition is identical to that of the British-made counterfeit halfpenny. Further study will undoubtedly reveal that the same button or token manufacturers who are believed responsible for the many Evasions and Conder tokens also manufactured most of the British counterfeits. At the moment, this is harder to disprove, than it is to prove, although there is a great need for further research that may prove Evasion Hybrids synonymous with most British counterfeits.

Current evidence also suggests that the "Evasion Hybrid" designation should not be limited to the British counterfeits alone, but also to a select group of Evasions that share a die with a British counterfeit. Therefore, like the British counterfeit, similar groups of Evasions might also be labeled Evasion Hybrids. With further study, it may be found that this designation should perhaps be limited to this select group of British Evasions.

Generic Style Counterfeits: Generally any counterfeit that, at first, appears to be a reasonable facsimile of the genuine issue. These counterfeits almost always employ prepared device, letter and number punches within their overall design.

Like the Crude style counterfeits, how well a Generic style counterfeit imitates the genuine issue is even more subject to personal opinion. In this respect, it might be said that several varieties of Atlee's Imitations might be considered Generic, rather than Crude. This demonstrates that there is no defining line between these two styles, although there would likely be little argument between the two extremes.

An allowance for various anomalous characteristics sometimes appearing on an otherwise Generic style counterfeit may sometimes be made. These allowances may include, but are not limited to such things as an upside down "A" used as a "V," or vice versa. Also, an engraved partial or whole letter or number, where the diesinker may not have possessed the proper punch, should also be allowed.

Simian Style Counterfeits: Any of a number of varieties of counterfeit George II and George III British halfpence and farthings that display very similar design features and elements. Specifically, the hand engraved letters have been described as "spidery," while the reverse figure of Britannia most often displays a very long ape-like pole (left) arm. Also, most often the reverse shield design is rectangular or square in appearance, with parallel lines making the crosses of St. Andrew and St. George.

The Simian style counterfeit halfpence and farthings are believed, by this author, to be the work of a single engraver who may have worked alongside other counterfeiters who were producing Generic style counterfeits as well as at least three Evasions, Atkins-95, 96 and 97. This possible linkage to these three Evasions indicates a British provenance for the Simian style counterfeits, that were previously thought to be American, based wrongly on their Crude design style.